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WHATCHEER,

OR

ROGER WILLIAMS IN BANISHMENT.

A POEM.

BY JOB DURFEE, Esq.

And, surely betweene my friends of the Bay and Plimouth, I was sorely tost for fourteen weeks, in a bitter cold winter season, not knowing what bread or bed did meane.—*Roger Williams' Letter to Mason.*

PROVIDENCE, R. I.
PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY CRANSTON & HAMMOND.
1832.

KE_1998

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WHATCHEER.

CANTO FIRST.

I sing the trials and the sufferings great,
Which FATHER WILLIAMS in his exile bore,
That he the conscience-bound might liberate,
And her religious rights the soul restore;
How, after flying persecution's hate,
And roving long by Narraganset's shore,
In lone Mooshausick's vale at last he sate,
And on *Religious Freedom* based our State.

II.

He was a man of spirit true and bold;
Feared not to speak his thoughts whate'er they were;
His frame, though light, was of an iron mould,
And fitted well fatigue and change to bear;
For God ordained that he should breast the cold
Of howling wilderness, in winter drear,
And of red Savages protection pray
From Christians, but—more savage far than they.

III.

Mid winter reigned; and Salem's infant town,
Where late were cleft the forest's skirts away,
Showed its low roofs, and from the thatching brown,
The sheeted ice sent back the sun's last ray;

The school-boys left the village slippery down,
So keen the blast came o'er the eastern bay,
And the pale sun in vapors thick went down,
And the glassed forest cast a sombre frown.

IV.

The busy house-wife guarded well the door,
That night, against the gathering winter storm—
Did the rude walls of all the cot explore
Where'er the snow-gust might a passage form;
And to the couch of age and childhood bore
With anxious care the mantle thick and warm;
And then of fuel gathered ample store,
And bade the blaze up the rude chimney roar.

V.

On this drear night was Williams seated by
His blazing hearth, his family beside,
And from his consort often burst the sigh,
As still her task of needle-work she plied;
And, from the lashes of her azure eye,
She often brushed the starting tear aside—
At spring's approach they savage wilds must try;
Such was the sentence of stern bigotry!

VI.

Beside the good man lay his Bible fair,
With open page upon the accustomed stand,
And many a passage had he noted there,
Of Israel wandering in the desert sand;
And each assurance had he marked with care,
Made by Jehovah of the *promised land;*
And from the sacred page he learned to dare
The exile's fate in wilderness afar.

VII.

Whilst pondered he the sacred volume o'er,
And often told to cheer his consort's breast,
How, for their faith, the blest apostles bore
The exile's wanderings and the dungeon's pest,

A heavy foot approached his humble door,
And open wide abrupt an entrance prest;
And lowered a deacon he had known before,
Strong in a church allied with civil power.

VIII.

"I come," he said in accents hard and stern,
"The Governor and Council's word to bear,
They have assembled, and with deep concern,
Hear thou abusest their indulgence fair;
Thy damned creed with horror do they learn,
Still thou to teach thy visiters dost dare,
Who smitten with thy sanctity, discern
Some Godliness in thee, and from us turn.

IX.

"Till spring we gave; and thou wast not to teach
Thy sentenced faith to erring men the while;
But to depart, or with submissive speech,
Regain the church and leave thy doctrines vile,
Of this injunction thou committest breach,
And Salem's church dost of her saints despoil:—
Plan too, 'tis rumored by the mouth of each,
A State, where Antichrist himself may preach.

X.

"From such a State our blessed elders see
Christ's church, e'en here, may the infection share;
'Tis therefore that the Council now decree,
That to the wilderness thou shalt not fare;
But 'tis their mandate hither sent by me,
That thou to Boston presently repair—
A ship there waits, now ready for the sea,
Homeward to bear thy heresy and thee.

XI.

Williams replied, "Thy message is unkind;
I e'en perchance may think it something rude,
The snow falls fast and searching is the wind,
And wild the blast howls through the darkened wood.

The path to Boston too is somewhat blind,
Nor are my nerves now in their better mood—
My soul has seldom at her lot repined,
But to obedience now she's disinclined.

XII.

A voyage to England and to start this night,
And brave the ocean at this season drear!—
'Twould scantly give the hardy tar delight,
Much less my consort and these pledges dear.—
Go tell the council that we are not quite
In health to bear a trial so severe,
And that if yield we, 'tis to brutal might,
And not to their kind feelings or their right."

XIII.

"Much do I grieve," the deacon then replied,
"To bear this answer to the governor—
'Twill show that thou hast Church and State defied,
And will I ween make not a little stir;
And should there be, by morrow's light espied,
A pinnace coming o'er the waters here,
With musketeers and Underhill their guide,
Be not surprised, but—Williams, quell thy pride!"

XIV.

This said, he turned, and hastily withdrew,
And all save Williams left behind in tears;
His wife still fair, now lost her blooming hue,
And nature yielded to her rising fears;
A giddy whirling past her senses through—
She almost heard the blazing musketeers—
And trembling—swooning—to her couch she flew,
And left the good man to his Bible true.

XV.

What could his firmness in this trying strait,
By Church and State with allied might assailed?
Should he forego the project of his state,
And leave the fagot to his race entailed?—

His hoped for home in wilderness of late,
At once beneath this blighting Siroc failed,
And in his prospect, he beholds await
The ready ship and ocean desolate.

XVI.

"Oh! for a friend," still as he paced the floor,
He often sighed, "now in my utmost need,
Whose counsels might some hidden way explore,
And give the glorious purpose to succeed;
But closed this night is every cottage door—
Yet there is one who is a friend indeed,
Forever present to the meek and poor—
I will thy counsels, mighty Lord, implore.

XVII.

Here dropt the friend of conscience on his knees,
With hands and heart at once to Heaven upreared,
And prayed the God who parted Egypt's seas,
Or in the bush to Amram's son appeared,
To aid his project, and the age release,
From mental bonds by Church and State prepared,
And e'en to give, that in this wilderness,
Religious Freedom might his children bless.

XVIII.

Our Father ceased—The tempest roared around
With double fury at this moment drear,
The cottage trembled, and the very ground
Seemed e'en to feel the element's career;
With ice and snow the window panes were bound,
Nor through their dimness could earth's robe appear,
And oft by fits its way the tempest found,
Down the stone chimney, with a roaring sound.

XIX.

Like God's own voice it did to Williams seem,
He sate a space within himself retired,
Then seemed to rouse as from a transient dream,
Just as the lamp's last flickering ray expired;

Around the room was shed a quivering beam,
Cast from the brands that on the hearth were fired;
The storm seemed lulled—and he began to deem,
In neighboring woods he heard the Panther's scream.

XX.

"But what is this? a knocking at the door—
Some way-lost wanderer seeks a shelter here;
On this dark night amid the tempest roar,
Ah wretched man thy sufferings are severe!"
He raised the bar that made the pass secure,
And with the snow-gust from the darkness drear,
A stranger entered whose large garments bore
No doubtful tokens of the tempest's power.

XXI.

Aged he seemed, and staff of length had he,
Which well a holy pilgrim had become,
But yet he sought with solemn dignity,
And easy step the centre of the room;
Then by the glancing light could Williams see,
His beard was long and did his breast o'ercome—
Age scored his temples—but still glancing free,
As from the ravage of a century,

XXII.

His eye beamed youth; and such a solemn mien,
Blent with such majesty and graceful air,
Our founder deemed he ne'er before had seen
In mortal form; and at the offered chair,
The stranger shook his head in mood serene,
And by the act revealed his long white hair,
As fell the fleecy covering from it clean,
Where down his shoulders hung its tresses sheen.

XXIII.

And when he spake his voice was low and clear,
But yet so deeply thrilling was its tone,
The listening soul seemed rapt into a sphere
Where angels speak in music of their own,

" Williams," it said, " I come on message here,
Of moment great to this blind age unknown,
Thou must not dally, or the tempest fear,
But fly at morn into the forest drear.

XXIV.

" Thou art to voyage an unexplored flood;
No chart is there thy lonely bark to steer;
Beneath her rocks, around her tempests rude,
And persecution's billows in her rear,
Shall shake thy soul till it is near subdued—
But when the welcome of Whatcheer! Whatcheer!!
Shall greet thine ears from Indian multitude,
Cast thou thine *Anchor* there, and *trust in God.*"

XXV.

The stranger ceased, and gently past away,
Though Williams kindly strove him to detain,
" The night was dark, and wild the tempest's sway
And lone the desert," but 'twas all in vain—
He only in soft accents seemed to say,
" Williams perchance I shall behold again
Thee when thou seest a more auspicious day,
Where joys man's faith in Nature's liberty."

XXVI.

The stranger past, and Williams by the fire,
Long mused on this mysterious event,
Was it some seraph from the Heavenly sphere,
Come down to urge and hallow his intent?—
To counsel—kindle—and his breast inspire
With words fired with prophetic sentiment?
Or had he dreamed—and had his fancy clear,
Drawn in his mind the vision of this seer?

XXVII.

'Twas strange! Mysterious!—Yet if dream it were,
'Twas such as prophets old had often known,
When Jacob saw the Heaven-ascending stair,
And Joseph hoarded for the dearth foreshown,

Ah! did the Omniscient hear his earnest prayer,
And did e'en Heaven the glorious project own,
Then would he by the morrow's light repair,
The voice obeying, to the wilds afar.

XXVIII.

He sought for rest; but little did delight,
Of slumber calm our Father then I trow;
Still mused he on the toils of morrow's flight,
Through unknown wilderness and wastes of snow;
How to elude the persecutor's sight,
Or shun the following quest of eager foe,
Taxed his invention with no labor light—
And long, and slow, and lagging past the night.

XXIX.

And if by fits came intervening sleep,
Through deserts wild and rugged roved his soul,
Here rose the rock—there sunk the headlong steep,
And fiercely round him seemed the storm to howl;
Whilst from the sheltered glen his foes would peep,
With taunts and jeers, and with revilings foul,
Scoff at his efforts, and their clamors deep,
Came mingled with that awful tempest's sweep.

XXX.

Morn came at last; and by the dawning gray,
Our founder rose his secret flight to take;
His wife and infant still in slumber lay—
Oh! shall he now that blissful slumber break?
Yes! he is one who deems that trials may,
Within the mind its mightier powers awake,
And that the storms, which gloom the pilgrim's way,
Prepare the soul for her eternal day.

XXXI.

"Mary!" (she woke) "prepare my travelling gear,
My pocket compass and my raiment strong,
My flint and steel to yield the needful fire—
Food for a week if that be not too long;

My hatchet too—its service I require,
To clip my fuel desert wilds among;
With these I go to found in forests drear,
A State where none shall persecution fear."

XXXII.

"What! goest thou Roger in this chilling storm?
Wait! wait at least until its rage is o'er—
Its wrath will bar e'en persecution's arm
From thee and me until it fails to roar—
Oh! what protecting hand will shield from harm
Thee by dark night, and where the friendly door
To give thee shelter from the dire alarm
Of hungry wolves, and beasts in human form."

XXXIII.

"Cease, cease, my Mary, thou dost e'en complain
That Heaven does kindly interpose to save—
Does wing this tempest's fury to restrain
The quest of foes, and prompts my soul to brave
The desert's perils, that I may maintain
The conscience free, 'gainst those who would enslave—
Wait till the storm shall cease to sweep the plain,
And we are doomed to cross yon heaving main."

XXXIV.

No more he said, for she in silence went
From place to place until her task was o'er;
Williams, the whilst, the fleeting moments spent,
To scrawl a message to delay the more—
Aye to beguile the beagles on the scent,
Till he had gained the distant wilds secure—
And hope, perchance, still vain illusions lent,
Friendship might plead, and bigotry relent.

XXXV.

Then he to Heaven his weeping spouse commends—
Implores its blessings on his purpose bold;
Salem still sleeps, and forth our founder wends
To breast the driving storm and chilling cold;

His wife remains, and from the window sends
A glance that all her heaving bosom told—
Dimly she marks him as his course he bends
O'er the white fields, and to'ard the woods extends.

XXXVI.

To show him parting, to the light she rears
His child unconscious yet of human wo,
And oft its guileless silver voice she hears,
"Oh! Where goes father through the driving snow."
Deeply her bosom at its accents stirs,
"He does my child to the wild red men go,
To seek protection from hard brethren here,
For thee and me and all to him that's dear."

XXXVII.

So forth he ventured—even like the dove
Which earliest left the angel guarded ark;
On weary pinions hovered she above
The vast of waters, heaving wild and dark,
Over waste realms of death, whilst still she strove
Some peak emergent from the flood to mark,
Where she might rest above the billows' sweep,
And build a stormy home 'mid that unquiet deep.

XXXVIII.

In boundless forests now our founder trod,
And South-west far his doubtful course he took;
The lofty pines and cedars round him nod—
Loud roars the tempest through the leafless oak;
Deep lies the snow upon the frozen sod,
And still the storms descending torrents choke
The Heavens above; and only fancy could,
So dim the view, conceive the solitude

XXXIX.

Of the wide forests that before him lay:
His ever steady onward pace alone
Told that from home he lengthened yet his way,
Whilst the like forms—the same drear hollow moan,

Seemed lingering around him yet to stay,
And every step of progress to disown;
As with all sail the bark the current may
Labor against, whilst still its downward sway

XL.

Impedes her course, and makes all labor vain.
So to our father seemed his journeying now;
Yet still he toiled—and still did he sustain
The same firm spirit.—Think ye he would bow,
Or yield to sufferings of corporeal pain,
Whom God had summoned from the bigot's slough
To plant Religious Freedom, and maintain
Her standard firm on fair Mooshausick's plain!

XLI.

Above his head the branches writhe and bend,
Or in the mingled wreck their ruin flies—
The storm redoubles, and the whirlwinds blend
The rising snow-drift with descending skies;
And oft the crags a friendly shelter lend
His breathless bosom, and his sightless eyes;
But, when the transient gust its fury spends,
He through the storm again upon his journey wends.

XLII.

Still truly does his course the magnet keep—
No toils fatigue him, and no fears appal;
Oft turns he at the glimpse of swampy deep,
Or thicket dense, or crag abrupt and tall,
Or backward treads to shun the headlong steep,
Or pass above the tumbling waterfall;
Yet still he joys whene'er the torrent's leap,
Or crag abrupt, or thicket dense, or swamp's far sweep

XLIII.

Assures him progress,—From gray morn till noon—
Hour after hour—from that drear noon until
The evening's gathering darkness had begun
To clothe with deeper glooms the vale and hill,

Sire Williams journeyed in the forest lone;
And then night's thickening shades began to fill
His soul with doubt—for shelter had he none—
And all the out-stretched waste was clad with one

XLIV.

Vast mantle hoar. And he began to hear
At times the fox's bark, and the fierce howl
Of wolf, sometimes afar—sometimes so near,
That in the very glen they seemed to prowl
Where now he, wearied, paused—and then his ear
Started to note some shaggy monster's growl,
That from his snow-clad rocky den did peer,
Shrunk with gaunt famine in that tempest drear,

XLV.

And scenting human blood—yea, and so nigh,
Thrice did our northern tiger seem to come,
He thought he heard the fagots crackling by,
And saw, through driven snow and twilight gloom,
Peer from the thickets his fierce burning eye,
Scanning his destined prey, and through the broom,
Thrice stealing on his ears the whining cry
Swelled by degrees above the tempest high.

XLVI.

Wayworn he stood—and fast that stormy night
Was gathering round him over hill and dale—
He glanced around and by the lingering light
Found he had paused within a narrow vale;
On either hand a snow-clad rocky height
Ascended high, a shelter from the gale,
Whilst deep between them, in thick glooms bedight,
A swampy dingle caught the wanderer's sight.

XLVII.

Through the white billows thither did he wade,
And deep within its silent bosom trod,
There on the snow his oft repeated tread
Hardened a flooring for his night's abode;

All there was calm, for the thick branches made
A skreen above, and round him closely stood
The trunks of cedars, and of pines arrayed
To the rude tempest, a firm barricade.

XLVIII.

And now his hatchet, with resounding stroke,
Hewed down the boscage that around him rose,
And the dry pine of brittle branches struck,
To yield him fuel for the night's repose:
The gathered heap an ample store bespoke—
He smites the steel—the tinder brightly glows,
And the fired match the kindled flame awoke,
And light upon night's seated darkness broke.

XLIX.

High branched the pines, and far the colonnade
Of tapering trunks stood glimmering through the glen;
Then joyed our father in this lonely glade,
So far from haunts of persecuting men,
That he might break of honesty the bread,
And blessings crave in his own way again—
Of the piled brush a seat and board he made,
Spread his plain fare and piously he prayed.

L.

"Father of mercies! thou the wanderer's guide,
In this dire storm along the howling waste,
Thanks for the shelter thou dost here provide,
Thanks for the mercies of the day that's past;
Thanks for the frugal fare thou hast supplied;
And Oh! may still thy tender mercies last;—
May the delusion of our race subside,
That chains man's conscience to the ruler's pride.

LI.

Grant that thy humble instrument still shun
His persecutors in their eager quest;—
Grant the asylum, yet to be begun,
To persecution's exiles yield a rest;

Let ages after ages take the boon,
And in religious freedom still be blest—
Grant that I live until this task be done,
And then O Lord! receive me as thine own."

LII.

Our father ceased, and with keen relish he
Refreshed his wearied frame in that lone dell;
Ah! little can his far posterity
Sense now the pleasures of that frugal meal;
For naught he knew of pampered luxury,
But toil and fast had done their office well,
And not the dainties brought o'er India's sea,
Or wrung from sweat of modern slavery,

LIII.

Are now so sweet as was his simple fare.
This banquet past, he would have sought repose;
But at the kindling blaze, heard wide and far
The howlings drear of forest monsters rose;
And lured around him by the vivid glare,
Came darkling with light foot along the snows
Whole packs of wolves, from their far mountain lair,
And the fierce cat which scarce the blaze might scare.

LIV.

Growling they come, and in dark groups they stand,
Show the white fang, and roll the bright'ning eye;
Till urged by hunger seemed the shaggy band
Even the flame's bright terrors to defy—
Then 'mid the group he hurled the blazing brand;
Swift they disperse and raise the scattered cry;
But rallying, soon back to the siege they came,
And scarce their rage paused at the mounting flame.

LV.

Yet Williams deemed that persecution took,
A form in them less odious than in men;
He on their dreary solitude had broke—
Aye, and had trespassed on their native glen;

His human shape they scantly too might brook;
For it had been an enemy to them;
But fiend-like man did into conscience look,
And for the secret thought his brother struck.

LVI.

Oft he recruited now the sinking blaze—
His stock of fuel seemed too scant to last;
And, in the terror of the glittering rays,
Was now the anchor of his safety cast;
With utmost reach the boscage did he raze,
Or clipt the branches overhead that past;
And still the burning pyre at times did raise,
Or hurled the flame at the fierce monster's gaze.

LVII.

At length the groups a panick seemed to seize,
And soon he knew the terrifying cause;
For swelling slowly 'neath the arching trees,
Trilled the long whine the dreadful panther draws;
A sound that might the boldest bosom freeze—
'Twas followed by a drear and awful pause—
Naught marred the silence save the murmuring breeze,
And the far storm, like roar of distant seas.

LVIII.

Of all the monsters of the dreary wood,
None like the panther did the hunter fear;
For man and beast he fearlessly pursued—
Whilst others shunned he was allured by fire;
And Williams knew how perilous his mood,
And for the trying onset did prepare;
Still by the rising blaze he firmly stood,
And every dangerous avenue he viewed.

LIX.

In God he trusted for deliverance—
He thought of Daniel in the lion's den—
He waited silent for the fierce advance—
He heard the fagots break along the glen—

Another long-drawn yell and the fierce glance
Of two bright burning eye-balls looking then
Out from the darkness, seemed e'en to enhance,
The mortal terrors of the sure mischance.

LX.

But at this moment from the darkness broke
A human voice in Narraganset's tongue;
"Neemat!" (my brother) in kind tone it spoke,
"How comes Awanux these drear wilds among?"
And at the accents the dark thickets shook,
And from them lightly the red hunter sprung,
And from his belt familiarly he took,
And fired his calumet, and curled its smoke.

LXI.

Then to our founder passed the simple cheer,
In sign of friendship to a wandering man,
"Let not," he said, "my brother quake with fear,
"'Twas Waban's cry at which the monsters ran."
Williams received the pledge of faith sincere;
Yet warily his guest began to scan.
Tall did his straight and active form appear,
And armed but with the hunter's simple gear.

LXII.

The bear's dark fur loose o'er his shoulders cast,
His hand did only at the breast confine,
The wampum wreath, which round his forehead past,
Did with the flames reflected brightness shine,
The beaver's girdle closely swathed his waist;
Its skirts hung low and trimm'd with 'broidery fine;
The well formed ankles bound in deer-skin close,
The melting snow-drops to the sight disclose.

LXIII.

Nature's kind feelings did his visage grace;
His gently arching brow was shorn all bare,
And the slight smile now vanished from his face,
Left the full trace of serious goodness there.

Though bright his eyes flashed 'neath the forehead's base,
They rather seem'd to smile than fiercely glare,
And the free dignity of *Waban's* race,
Seemed moving in his limbs and breathing from his face.

LXIV.

Williams the pledge of friendship now returned,
And courteous thanks to the red hunter gave;
"From the great spirit sure my brother learned
His brother's danger, when he came to save."
"Waban," he answered, "from his lodge discerned,
A stranger's fire and heard the monsters rave—
Waban has long within these wilds sojourned;
But ne'er before has pale Awanux burned

LXV.

"His fire within this far sequestered glade.
Wanders my brother from his homeward way?
The storm is thick, he surely may have strayed—
Or has he hunted through the weary day
The rapid moose; or has he come to lay
The subtil snare beneath this lonely shade,
To trap the deer, or artfully essay
To catch the wilely beavers, who have made
Their cunning wigwams in the river's bed?

LXVI.

"'Twere hard to tell my brother of the woods,
What cause has forced his pale-faced brother here,
The red and white men have their different modes,
And scant is Narraganset's tongue, I fear,
In fitting terms to teach my brother's ear,
The themes of strife among white multitudes—
Themes yet unknown within these forests drear,
Where undisturbed ye worship various gods,
And persecution leave to white abodes.

LXVII.

"Let it suffice, (for weary is the night,)
That late across the mighty lake I came,

And sought protection here of brothers white,
From pale chiefs armed with chains or fagot's flame,
Who dare to burn their brothers who delight,
The mighty spirit over all the same,
To worship in a mode they think is right,
Because from theirs that mode hath difference slight.

LXVIII.

My brethren here had persecution fled,
And much I hoped with them a home to find,
But to our common God whene'er we prayed,
My worship seemed ill-suited to their mind;
It differed greatly from their own they said;
Their anger kindled, and with speech unkind,
They drove me from my family and shed,
To rove an exile in this tempest dread.

LXIX.

And now my brother through the wilds I go,
To seek some far—some lone sequestered glen—
Where never shall the flame of fagot glow,
Kindled by wrath of persecuting men;
Where all may worship, as their Gods they know,
Or lights the conscience the believer's ken,
Where ages after ages still may bow,
And from free hearts the free orisons flow.

LXX.

Waban a space mused on our founder's tale,
Silent he sate in meditative mood,
For much he wondered why his brothers pale,
For different worship sought their kindred's blood.
At last he deemed, they little understood,
That the great spirit was a father kind,
Or thought that Chepian* was perchance their God,
Who to all deeds of goodness disinclined,
Joyed only in the fell and cruel mind.

*The name of the Indian's Devil.

LXXI.

Then blended pity with his wonder grew,
Here was the victim of that evil one,
Who from the demon's angry servants flew,
To seek a shelter in the forests lone.
" Brother," he said, " thy brother's mused upon
The tales thou tellest of thy kindred's ire,
And much it grieves him thou art forced to shun,
Thy well framed wigwam—thy familiar fire,
And sleep in wilds afar amid this tempest dire.

LXXII.

" Hear brother now what Waban has to say,
The night is cold and fast the snows descend—
Here round thy sleep will howl the beasts of prey,
And scarce the flames will thy repose defend;
Will not my brother to my wigwam wend?
It smokes hard by, deep in the sheltered glen;
There may my brother this drear season spend,
And shun the wrath of Chepian's angry men,
Until Sowanui's breezes scatter flowers again.

LXXIII.

Right welcome to the red man's lodge shall be,
His pale-faced brother safe from Sachems pale;
Waban's nausamp and venison shall be free,
When hunger craves, and when his store shall fail,
His dart is true, and swift and far will he,
Pursue the bounding deer o' er hill and vale—
When melts the snow we may together raise,
On Seekonk's banks, our common field of maize."

LXXIV.

Williams replied, " my brother sure is kind,
But his red friends are doubtless with him here,
And they may show my kindred left behind,
To track my footsteps through the forest drear—
To journey homeward I have little mind;
My course is with the sun to wilds afar—

There would I form, with leave of Sachems red,
A tribe which ne'er should stake or fagot dread."

LXXV.

"Alone is Waban," was the sad reply,
"His wife and child have to that country gone,
Where go our spirits when our bodies die,
And left thy brother in his lodge alone:
He goes by day to catch the beavers shy,
And sits by night in his still house to moan,
And much 'twould please him should the wanderer come,
And tell him where the spirits have their home."

LXXVI.

"Brother, I thank thee—thou art kind indeed,"
Our founder said—"and with thee I will go,
Would that my brethren of the christian creed,
Did half thy charity and goodness know!
Waban thou wilt thy brother's purpose speed,
And all the boundaries of those countries show,
Which lie around famed Narraganset's bay,
And name the chiefs that over them hold sway."

LXXVII.

"Waban can do it"—was the answer quick—
And Williams followed as the hunter led;
With blazing brands they moved through boscage thick;
The wolves around them gathered as they sped;
But Waban often raised the mimic shriek
Of the fierce panther, and as oft they fled;
And now the ground, descending swiftly steep,
Told they approached the hunter's valley deep.

LXXVIII.

Then Williams noted, through the deepest night,
The sparkles rising from the roof unseen,
And, by the glancing of the fire-brand's light,
Above him marked the thickening branches skreen;
For denser here, and of a loftier height,
Rose the broad cedar and the tapering pine;

Their still boughs bent beneath the burden hoar,
And further off was heard the hollow tempest's roar.

LXXIX.

The undressed deer skin closed the entrance rude
Of the frail mansion of our founder's friend;
"Brother," said he, "this is my poor abode,
But thou art welcome—it will thee defend
From this cold storm," and as he spoke he showed
The open pass, and both did entering bend—
From 'mid the room the blazing fagots sent
The smoke and sparkles through the low roof's rent;

LXXX.

And glancing around did for the ceiling show
The braided mat of many colors made,
Veiled here and there, where hanging in a row,
The beavers' hides their silvery coats displayed;
And oft the antlers that once armed the brow
Of bounding buck, were round the room arrayed;
And here and there the hunter's gear among
The dusky haunches of his venison hung.

LXXXI.

Hard by the blazing hearth, raised from the ground
Three braided pallets, with their furs bespread,
Shewed where red Waban's family once found
The humble settle, and still humbler bed;
But now, alas! within a narrower bound,
Two of the three on colder couches laid—
The wampum girdle, that his spouse once wore,
Gleamed on her garb of furs the settle o'er.

LXXXII.

Warm was the room, and plenteous was the cheer
Which generous Waban did our founder bring;
In trays the nocake,* and the joints of deer,
And in the gourd-shell water from the spring;
And all the whilst he made our founder hear,

* A corruption of the Indian Nokehick—parched meal.

' How he had pierced the wild duck on the wing;
How westward lately he the moose pursued,
Until he struck him far in lone Mooshausick's wood.

LXXXIII.

Slightly our founder tasted the plain fare,
For toil and chill far more than hunger prest,
This Waban noted and with tender care,
The vacant pallet shewed, and urged him rest;
Waban he said would still the fire repair,
And comfortable keep his pale-faced guest,
" And may the Manitto of dreams," he said,
" The happiest visions on thy slumbers shed.

LXXXIV.

" Upon this pallet once was wont to lay
Her active form, whose spirit now is gone;
And may that spirit to thy visions say
Where now she dwells, and where my little son;
Whether on that blest island far away
O'er the blue hills beyond the setting sun,
They with their kindred joy, or nearer home,
They wait until the sire and husband come."

LXXXV.

Williams replied, that he would speak at morn,
Of that far journey which the spirit takes;
And name the guide, who never soul forlorn,
Whilst passing through death's gloomy night, forsakes.
His brother then, on fitting day in turn,
Would name the bounds, by rivers, bays and lakes,
Of neighboring chiefs, and how each sagamore
Might stand affected to his purpose pure.

LXXXVI.

Our founder slept; and on that night I ween,
Deep was the slumber of that pallet low,
Calm were its dreams as was his breast serene—

Such sleep can persecutors never know;
He slept, until the dawning light was seen
Down through the dome to glance upon his brow;
Then Waban woke him to his simple cheer
Of the pure fount, nausamp,* and savory deer.

* The word *samp* is a corruption of the Indian word *nausamp*, and has the same meaning.

CANTO SECOND.

It was the morning of a Sabbath day,
When Williams rose to Waban's simple cheer,
But where, knew not, save that vast forests lay
Betwixt his home and the lone wigwam here;
Yet 'twas a place of peace, no thing of clay,
'Twixt God and conscience in communion near,
Came, with profane and impious control,
To check the heavenward wanderings of his soul.

II.

God loves the wilderness—in deserts lone,
Where all is silent—where no living thing
Mars the hushed solitudes—where Heaven looks down,
And Earth looks up, each as if marvelling
That aught should be, and, through the vast unknown,
Thought-breathing silence seems as uttering
The present God—there does he rear his throne,
And tranced in boundless thoughts the soul doth own,

III.

And feel his strength within.—This day, once more,
In place thus sacred; did our founder keep;
None, save the Deity he bent before,
Marked the devotions of his feelings deep—
None do I say? yet there was Waban poor;
Alas! his mind in utter night did sleep;
He saw our founder at his earnest prayer,
Yet knew not why his supplications were.

IV.

Yet earnestly the pious man besought,
That Heaven would give to shed the gospel light,
On the kind pagan's breast, as yet untaught,
Save in the ways of an Egyptian night;
And much he prayed, that to the truth when brought,
Washed of his sins in garments pure and white,
He might assist to soothe each savage train,
And win a home for persecuted men.

V.

Williams the task of goodness now essayed,
To light the wanderer with religion true;
The tenfold darkness, that his soul arrayed,
Concealed its workings from our founder's view;
Save when some query rare, and strangely made,
Did its dream-wildered wakening instinct shew—
Long was the task; and Williams back began,
At Earth's creation and the fall of man.

VI.

He told how God from nothing formed the earth,
And gave each being shape surpassing fair;
How He in Eden, at their happy birth,
Placed with kind blessings the first human pair;
How, disobeying, they were driven forth,
And they, and theirs, consigned to sad despair—
Until the God incarnate pitying gave
Himself for man, and made it just to save.

VII.

Then told he how the blessed martyrs bore
The chains of dungeons, and the fagot's flame,
Glad that their sufferings might attest the more
To their full faith in their Redeemer's name—
How his disciples past from shore to shore,
Salvation's joyful tidings to proclaim;
How hither now they brought the Gospel's light
To cheer the red men, wrapt in pagan night.

VIII.

Waban attentive heard our Founder's strain,
And at its pause he long in silence sate;
A graver tone did o'er his visage reign,
And all his heart's deep feelings indicate.
At length he vented thus the mental train—
"Weak is my soul and dark is her estate!
No book has she to tell of Manit high,
Except this outstretched earth and starry sky.

IX.

Great news Awanux brings the red men here—
News, that doth far their legends old excel;
Yet give to Waban the attentive ear,
And the traditions of his sires he'll tell,
From days afar, down many a rolling year—
Down to thy brothers red, their fathers' tale
Comes to inform them in their mortal state,
What powers they should revere or deprecate.

X.

Here Waban paused, and, sitting, mused a space,
As pondering gravely on the mighty theme;
Deep thought was graven in his solemn face,
And dimly did his groping memory seem
Gathering the scattered legends of his race.
At length he roused, as from a passing dream,
And from his mat, majestically slow,
Reared his tall form, and thus began in accents low.

XI.

"Brother, that time is distant—far away,
When Earth and every living thing was not,
Save our great God, Cawtantowit, who lay
Extended through immensity, where naught
Save shoreless waters were—and dead were they—
No living thing did on their bosom float—
And silence all that boundless space did fill;
For the Great Spirit slept—and all was still.

XII.

" But though he slept, yet, as the human soul
To this small frame, his being did pervade
The universal space, and ruled the whole,
E'en as the soul, when in deep slumber laid,
Doth its wild fantasies and dreams control,
And giveth wild creation shape and shade
Just as she wills. But the Great Spirit broke
His sleep at last, and all the boundless shook.

XIII.

" In a vast eagle's form embodied, He
Did o'er the deep on outstretched pinions spring;
Fire in his eye lit all immensity,
Whilst his majestically gliding wing
Trembled hoarse thunders to the shuddering sea;
And, through their utmost limits quivering,
The conscious waters felt their Manittoo,
And life, at once, their deepest regions knew.

XIV.

" The mountain whale came spouting from below,
The porpoise plunged along the foaming main,
The smaller broods in sporting myriads go,
With glancing backs, along the liquid plain;
Yet still refused her giant form to show—
Ay, sullenly below did yet remain
Earth-bearing tortoise, the *Unamis* vast,
And o'er her back the lofty billows past.

XV.

" Then great Cawtantowit in his anger spoke,
And from his flaming eyes the lightnings past,
And from his wings the tenfold thunders broke.
The sullen tortoise heard his words at last—
And slowly she her rocky grasp forsook,
And her huge back of woods and mountains vast,
From the far depths tow'rd upper light began
Slowly to heave—the affrighted waters ran

XVI.

"Hither and thither, tumultuous and far—
But still Unamis, heaving from below
The full formed earth, first, through the waves did rear
The fast sky-climbing Allegany's brow,
Dark, vast and craggy—from its summits bare
The rolling billows fell—and rising now,
All its vast forest up the breezy air
Came out of Ocean, and, from verdure fair,

XVII.

"Shed the salt showers. Far o'er the deep,
Hills after hills still lift their clustered trees,
Wild down the rising slopes the waters leap,
Then from the up-surging plain the ocean flees,
Till lifted from the flood, in vale and steep,
And rock, and forest waving to the breeze,
Earth, on the tortoise borne, frowned ocean o'er,
And spurned the angry billows from her thundering shore.

XVIII.

"But great Cawtantowit, on his pinions still,
O'er the lone earth majestically sprung,
And whispered to the mountain, vale and hill,
And with new life the teeming regions rung;
The feathered songsters tuned their carols shrill,
Herds upon herds did plain and mountain throng;
In the still pools did the wise beavers toil,
And the armed seseks* did their folds uncoil.

XIX.

"Yet man was not—then great Cawtantowit spoke
To the hard mountain crags and called for man.
And sculptured, breathing, from the cleaving rock,
Sprang the armed warrior, and a strife began
With living things.—Hard as his native block,
Was his stone heart, and through it ran
Blood cold as ice—and the great spirit struck
This cruel man, and him to atoms broke.

*Sesek—rattlesnake.

XX.

" Then he the oak, of fibre hard and fine,
With the first red man's soul and form indued,
And made he woman of the tapering pine,
That blooming 'neath its sheltering branches stood;
She on the red man's bosom did recline,
Like the bright rainbow on the thunder-cloud.
And the Great Spirit saw his work divine,
And on the first red pair shed smiles benign.

XXI.

" He gave them all these forests far and near,
The forms that fly, and those that creeping go,
The healthful fountains, and the rivers clear,
And all the fish that sport their waves below;
Then gave he man the swiftness of the deer,
And armed his hands with arrows and the bow
And bade him shelter still his consort dear,
And tread his far domain without a peer.

XXII.

" Then did he send Yotaanit on high,
(For Gods he fashioned as he formed the land,)
And bade him star with fires the azure sky,
And kindle the round blaze of Keesuckquand;
And then, to cheer by night the hunter's eye,
Bright Nanapaushat sprung from Wamponand,
Thus with his will the manittoos comply,
And every region knows its deity.*

XXIII.

" All things were formed thus from materials good,
And what had been refused was foul and bad,
But it had felt the influence of the God,
(How should it not?) and a black demon, sad,
Cruel and stern, and loving strife and blood,
Filled with all hatred, and with fury mad,

*See note.

Sprang into life—such was fell Chepian's birth,
The hate of gods, and terror of the earth.

XXIV.

" Then to the south-west the Great Spirit flew,
Whence the soft breezes of the summer come,
And from the depths Sowaniu's island drew,*
And bade its fields with lasting verdure bloom.
O'er it he bent another welkin blue,
Which never night, or clouds, or tempests gloom,
And kindled suns the lofty arches through,
And bade them shine with glory ever new.

XXV.

" When great Cawtantowit thus had finished all,
No more did he on eagle's pinions roam;
There found his weary wing its final goal,
And there established he his lasting home;
There did he cast the eagle, and recall
His pristine glory, and his shape resume;
There still he dwells, the all-pervading soul
Of men and manittoos—yea, of creation's whole.

XXVI.

" All that is good does from Cawtantowit flow,
All that is bad does Chepian fell supply;
Praying for good we to Cawtantowit bow,
And shunning evil we to Chepian cry,
To other manittoos we offerings owe,
Dwell they in mountain, flood, or lofty sky;
And oft they aid us when we hunting go,
Or in fierce battle rushing on the foe.

XXVII.

" And manittoos, that never death shall fear,
Do too within this mortal body rest;
What else my brother is it beating here?
What prompts these thoughts—what moves this heaving breast?

*Sowaniu—used here as a word of three syllables, was written by R. Williams, " Sowwainiu."

Whilst like Cawtantowit does the soul appear,
Pervading all—of ruling power possessed;
And when her mortal mansion here decays,
She to Sowaniu's blessed island strays.

XXVIII.

"There aye to joy; if, whilst she dwelt with men,
She wisely counselled, and did bravely fight,
Or watchful caught the beavers in the glen,
Or nimbly followed the far moose's flight;
But if a sluggard and a coward, then
To rove all wretched in the glooms of night,
Misled by Chepian, a poor wandering ghost,
'Mong swamps, dens, fens, brakes, bogs and brambles lost.

XXIX.

"And now my brother rightly worship we,
When to Cawtantowit mounts our zealous prayer,
Or when of Chepian we, right earnestly,
Entreat that us from ways of harm he spare?
The harm he has, is all his own we see,
And good Cawtantowit has not e'en a share;
Why should I not beseech that Chepian be,
Much sparing of his harm to mine and me?"

XXX.

Williams replied, "When the red warriors brave
The fight's dark tempest, and for glory die,
Trembles my brother whilst the battles rave,
And at the glancing arrows winks his eye?
And does he, crouching, a base recreant, crave
The hatchet's mercy o'er him lifted high?
Who prays to Chepian is a trembling slave,
And dying fills at last a coward's grave."

XXXI.

Strongly these words to Waban's pride appealed,
Yet back upon him did the memory rush,
Of by-gone ages, and of many a field,
Where fought his fathers, who with victory flush,
Not to Cawtantowit, but to Chepian kneeled

And thanked his aid—They cowards! and the blush
That in their worship should seem fear revealed,
Was scantly by his tawny hue concealed.

XXXII.

At last he said, "my brother doubtless knows,—
He has a book which his Great Spirit wrote;
Brave were my fathers, yet did they repose
With hope in Chepian, and his aid besought
When marched they forth to shed the blood of foes;
But they perhaps, like Waban, never thought
That they were cowards, when they fiercely prayed
Chepian to give the work of vengeance aid.

XXXIII.

Waban will think, and should it seem like fear—
Waban near shrunk when round him battle roared,
And at the stake when bound his torturers near,
Among the clouds thy brother's spirit soared,
And scorned her foes—but should it seem like fear,
To worship Chepian whom his sires adored,
No more will he be that dread demon's slave,
For ne'er will Waban fill a coward's grave."

XXXIV.

Thus in communion grave they past the day,
And night returning brought its slumbers sweet,
And on the following morn the sun's broad ray
Looked down serene on Waban's lone retreat.
Williams might now have journeyed on his way,
Had he known whither to direct his feet;
Therefore with Waban still did he delay,
To scan the savage tribes that round him lay.

XXXV.

Hence might he secretly to Salem write,
And friends approving still his plans arrange,
For Waban soon would bear his peltry light
To Salem's mart, where he might interchange
The mute epistles, meet for friendly sight,
But which might still prompt bigotry's revenge,

If to the vulgar eye they should appear,
And point the persecutor's footsteps here.

XXXVI.

Among the savage tribes around to go,
And sound the feelings of each different clan,
Had fitting seemed, but little did he know
How they might treat a pale-faced, outlawed man,
Friendless and homeless, wandering to and fro,
And flying from his own white chieftain's ban;
They for a price might strike the fatal blow,
Or bear him captive to his ruthless foe.

XXXVII.

Better it were, so deemed our father well,
To approach and win the savage by degrees,
Since to his lot the dangerous duty fell,
(For such it seems were Heaven's all-wise decrees,)
To found a State, unarmed, where rung the yell
Of barbarous nations, on the midnight breeze;
Against the scalping knife with no defence,
Save in the heaven-wrought shield his heart's benevolence.

XXXVIII.

This, this alone, his buckler and his brand,
This, yet unproved and doubted by the best,
In cheerless wilds, mid many a savage band,
Spurned from his home, by christian men opprest,
Must glance the warrior's dart, unnerve his hand,
And give him conquest in his rugged breast.
The dreaded panther, by the feeble hare,
Must be approached and soothed in his own mountain lair.

XXXIX.

That night returning from the accustomed pool,
Waban came laden with the beavers' spoils,
And joy seemed dancing in his very soul,
As he displayed the fruits of his long toils;
Much he rejoiced, and Williams heard the whole,
How long he'd watched, and of his frequent foils;

Then how the cunning beasts were captured all,
As through the fractured ice they sought to crawl.

XL.

" Bravely," said Williams, " has my brother done,
No more the cunning wights will mock his skill.
Waban is rich ; will he not journey soon
To the pale wigwams, and his girdle fill
With the bright wampum?—e'er to-morrow's sun
Shall hide behind the top of yonder hill,
Waban may gain the pale-faced stranger's town,
And in his brother's wigwam sit him down."

XLI.

" The hunter goes," said Waban in reply,
Then fired his calumet and curled its smoke,
And silent sat in all the dignity,
Which conscious worth can give the human look.
When ceased to mount the fragrant clouds on high,
He from the exhausted bowl the embers shook,
Then spread on earth the brown deer's rustling hide,
Expanding to the eye its naked side.

XLII.

And thus he spake, " my brother doth require
Waban to show where neighboring sachems reign,
Doubtless he seeks to light his council fire,
Within some valiant and good chief's domain ;
That he might shun the persecutor's ire,
And pray his God without the fear of men.
On Waban's words my brother may repose,
Whilst these far feet are printing distant snows."

XLIII.

Then from the hearth a quenched brand he took
And on the skin traced many a curving line ;
Here rolled the river—there the winding brook,
Here rose the hills, and there the vales decline,
Here spreads the bay, and there the ocean broke
Along red Waban's map of rude design.

The work now finished, he to Williams spoke,
" Brother, here, on the red man's country look.

XLIV.

" Here's Waban's lodge, thou seest it smokes between
Dark rolling Seekonk and Cohannet's wave ;*
Both floods on-flowing through their borders green,
In Narraganset's basin find their grave.
O'er all the country 'twixt those waters sheen,
Reigns Massasoit, Sachem good and brave ;
Yet he has subject Keenomps far and near,
Who bring him tribute of the slaughtered deer,

XLV.

" And bend his battle bow—strong is he now,
But has been stronger—ere dark pestilence
Devoured his warriors—laid its hundreds low,
That Sachem's war-whoop roused to his defence
Three thousand bow-men, and he still can show
A mighty force, whene'er the stirring sense
Of common wrong, does in the bosom glow,
And prompts to battle with the offending foe.

XLVI.

" His highest chief is Corbitant the stern—
He bears a fox's head and panther's heart,
He 'gainst Awanux does in secret turn,
Sharpens his knife, and whets his thirsty dart.
His council fires in Mattapoiset burn,†
Of Pokanoket's woods his licensed part.
Cruel is he, and terrible his train.
Light not your fires within that wolf's domain.

XLVII.

" Here tow'rd the winter, where the fountains feed
These rolling rivers, do the Nipnets dwell,
They Massasoit bring the skin and bead,
And rush to war when rings his battle yell ;

*The Indian name for the place where Taunton now is, was Cohannet, and is here applied to the river.

†Mattapoiset, now Swansey.

Valiant are they, yet oft their children bleed,
When the far west sends down the Maquas fell;
Warriors who hungry on their victims steal,
And make of human flesh a dreadful meal.

XLVIII.

"Here lies Namasket tow'rd the rising sun—
There Massasoit spends his seasons cold,
The warriors there are led by Annawan,
Of open hand and of a bosom bold;
Here farther down, Cohannet's banks upon,
Spreads broad Pocasset, strong Apannow's hold;
The bowmen there tread Massasoit's land,
E'en to Seconnet's billow-beaten strand.

XLIX.

"Still tow'rd the rising sun might Waban show—
And count each tribe, and each brave keenomp name,
But then his brother's footsteps do not go
Toward the pale-face, and the fagot's flame;
He looks toward the tomahawk and bow,
And does the friendship of the red man claim:
Therefore will Waban, on the western shores,
Count Narraganset's men, and sagamores.

L.

"Two mighty chiefs, one cautious, wise and old,
One young and strong, and terrible in fight,
All Narraganset and Coweset hold;
One lodge they build, one council fire they light;
One sways in peace, and one in battle bold—
Five thousand warriors give their arrows flight—
This is Miantonomi strong and brave,
And that Canonicus his uncle grave.*

LI.

"Dark rolling Seekonk does their realm divide
From Pokanoket, Massasoit's reign,
Thence sweeping down the bay, their forests wide
Spread their dark foliage to the billowy main;

*See note.

Thence tow'rd the setting sun, by ocean's side,
Stretches their realm, to where the rebel train,
Ruled by grim Uncas, with their hatchets died
In brothers' blood, on Pequot stream abide.*

LII.

"Canonicus is as the beaver wise,
And M'antonomi as the panther bold;
But tow'rd the faces pale their watchful eyes
Are oft in awful thinking silence rolled;
And often, in their heaving bosoms rise,
Thoughts that their lips have none save Keenomps told;
They seem two buffalos the herds that lead,
Scenting the hunters gathering round their mead.

LIII.

"When first his fire Awanux kindled here,
Haup's chief was weak, and broken was his heart;†
Disease had swept his warriors far and near,
And at his breast looked Narraganset's dart;
Awanux gave him strength, and with strange fear
Did M'antonomi at the big guns start;
He dropt his hatchet, but his hate remains,
And naught save counsel wise his wrath restrains.

LIV.

"He sees the strangers spreading far around,
And earth turn pale as fast their numbers grow,
And fiercely would he to the battle bound,
And for his country strike the deadly blow;
But at his back the Pequot's yells resound,
And on his left the Nipnet bends the bow—
And even thus his hatchet scarcely sleeps;
It dreams of Haup, and in its slumber leaps.

LV.

"But brother still Miantonomi is
A Sachem valiant, yea, and generous too,

* See note.

† Haup, or Mount Hope, the summer residence of Massasoit.

And gray Canonicus is just and wise,
His hands are ever to his tongue most true;
If from their lands my brother's smoke should rise,
Whate'er those Sachems say, that will they do;
But Waban still doth not his friend advise,
To cross the Seekonk where their country lies.

LVI.

"Brother attend, and hear the reasons why,
There at Mooshausick dwells a dark pawaw,
Who hates Awanux, doth his God defy,
And worships Chepian with the deepest awe;
He'll give my brother's town a cloudy sky,
And to his councils under-sachems draw;
E'en now he whets the Narraganset knife,
Points at our clan, and thirsts for human life.

LVII.

"Safer on Seekonk's hither border may
My brother build, and wake his council blaze,
Clear are the meads—the trees were swept away
By mighty burnings in our fathers' days.
There early verdure springs, and flow'rets gay—
Long grows the grass, and thrifty is the maize;
And good old Massasoit's sheltering wing
Will shield thy weakness from each harmful thing."

LVIII.

"Brother I thank thee," said our founder here,
Oft have I seen thy chief on Plymouth's shore,
I will to-morrow seek those meadows clear,
And thy fair Seekonk's hither banks explore.
But will not Waban pass Namasket near,
Where oft that wise and good old Sagamore,
Brave Massasoit, spends the season drear?
"He will my brother"—"Then let Waban hear—

LIX.

Tell thou that Sachem, generous and wise,
That Williams lingers in thy cabin low,
That he his children and his country flies,

To shun the anger of a christian foe;
And that to him his pale friend lifts his eyes,
And ask's protection.—Tell him that his wo
Springs from one thought, that these few words include;
Each man should Worship as he knows his God."

LX.

A pause ensued, and Waban silent sate;
Yet to himself his lips repeating were;
At length he answering broke the pause sedate,
"Waban remembers and the talk will bear."
Then he in silence fired his calumet,
And gave its vapours to the wigwam's air;
Whilst Williams wrote, with stationary rude,
His first epistle from the lonely wood.

LXI.

'Twas on the inner bark stript from the pine,
Our father penciled this epistle rare;
Two blazing pine knots did his torches shine,
His desk a pallet, and a mat his chair:
He wrote his spouse the brief familiar line,
How he had journeyed, and his roof now where;
And that poor Waban was his host benign,
And bade her cheer and give him blankets fine.

LXII.

Then bade her send the Indian presents bought,
When first they suffered persecution's thrall—
The strings of Wampum, and the scarlet coat,
The tinselled belt and jewel coronal;
His pocket Bible, which his haste forgot,
For he had cheering hopes of Waban's soul;
Then gave her solace to the bad unknown,
That God o'errules and still protects his own.

LXIII.

And, to the hunter, Williams now presents
The secret charge, with all directions meet:
For Waban means to urge his journey hence

Ere dawns the day upon his lone retreat;
And then again did slumber steep the sense—
And nought our founder knew, till morn complete;
Then roused, and found his generous host was gone,
The lodge all silent, and himself alone.

LXIV.

His fast he broke with the accustomed prayer,
And trimmed him for his walk to Seekonk's side,
Calm was the morn, and pure the winter's air,
As from the wigwam forth our founder hied;
Tall rose the pines—so thick the branches were,
That through their skreen, scarce were the heavens espied;
But from the foliage, frequent drops declare,
In upper gales, the snows dissolving are.

LXV.

Now from the swamp to upland woods he past,
Where leafless boughs branched thinner over head,
And saw the welkin not a cloud o'ercast,
And felt the settled snows give firmer tread—
Calm now was all, no wild and thundering blast
Mixed earth with heaven, as through the boughs it sped;
Far as his eyes the boundless forest traced,
Glimmered the lifeless snows, and stretched the lonely waste.

LXVI.

Onward he sped, the magnet still his guide,
And westward straight his course through forests took;
Across his path, with antlers branching wide,
The bounding deer oft from the thicket broke;
The timid partridge, at his rapid stride,
On thundering wings the sheltering bush forsook,
And the wild turkey foot and pinion plied,
Or from her lofty boughs uncouthly cried.

LXVII.

At last a sound like murmurs from the shore
Of far-off ocean, when the storm is bound,
Grows on his ear, and still increases more

As he advances, till the woods resound,
And seem to tremble with the constant roar
Of many waters.—Ay the very ground
Begins to shake—when 'neath the arching trees,
Bright glimmering, and fast gliding down he sees

LXVIII.

Broad rushing waters—to their dizzy steep
Hither they come—thence, glimmering far as sight,
Up 'twixt the groves can trace their coming sweep—
Here, from the precipice all frothy white,
Uttering an earthquake in their headlong leap,
And flinging sunbows o'er their showery flight,
And bursting wild, down, down, all foam they go
To the dark gulph, and smoke and boil below.

LXIX.

Thence, hurrying onward through the narrow bounds
Of banks precipitous, they murmuring go—
Till by the jutting cliffs half wheeling round,
They leave the view among the hills below—
There paused our Father, ravished with the sound
Of the wild waters, and their rapid flow,
And there, all lonely, joyed that he had found
Thy Falls, Pawtucket, and where Seekonk wound.

LXX.

And as he dallied on its margin still,
His thoughts a space did on the future pause,
Here might his children drive the busy mill,
Here whirl the stones—here clash the riving saws;
But little thought he that wild torrent's will
Would e'er so far comply with human laws,
As from the maid the spindle to receive,
And learn to spin and her fair garments weave.

LXXI.

Now, from the scene, reluctantly he past,
And wandering down the eastern bank he sped,
Seeking for Waban's meads—yet oft he cast

The searching glance across the river's bed,
Where rose the future keel and lofty mast
Of many a giant yet the deep to tread;
Those ancient groves in pristine silence stood
As if yet listening to the voice of God.

LXXII.

Still on the eastern bank our founder sped—
Here stretched the thicket deep, there swampy fen,
Here sunk the vale, there rose the hillock's head,
Oaks crowned the mound, and cedars gloomed the glen,
Where'er he moved—at length his footsteps led
Where a bright fountain, sparkling like a gem,
Burst from the caverned clift, and glittering wound
Its copious streamlet with a murmuring sound

LXXIII.

Far down the glade; and groves of cedars green,
With woven branches on the winter side,
Repelled the northern storm, whilst clear and sheen,
Crispt by its pebbly bed, the glancing tide
Gleamed in the sun, or darkened where the skreen
Of boughs o'erhung its music murmuring glide—
It laughed along, and its broad southern glade
Was compassed far by the dense forest shade.

LXXIV.

Charmed with the scene our sire explored the place,
And penetrated far the thickets round;
At length his vision opened on a space,
Level and broad, and stretching without bound
Far tow'rd the south, nor rose o'er all its face
A tree, or shrub, or rock, or swelling mound;
Yet in large herds, far o'er the snows appear,
With antic gambols the far bounding deer;

LXXV.

And further down the Narraganset flood,
Ne'er ploughed by keel, outstretched its fretted blue,
With isles begemmed, fringed by the hazy wood

Of far Coweset, meets our founder's view;
So long had he 'neath shady forests trod,
That when this prospect on his vision grew,
His soul as from a prison seemed to flee,
And on the wings of thought range an immensity.

LXXVI.

Raptured he paused—here then was Waban's mead,
In yonder little glen the fountain by,
He'd rear his shelter—here his flocks should feed,
And graze these meadows 'neath the summer sky;
There by his cot he'd sow the foodful seed,
And round his garden raise a paling high;
Here by the dusky eve, should herds be seen,
Led by the tinkling bell from meadows green.

LXXVII.

Ay, here in fancy did he almost see
A lovely hamlet in the future blest,
Where christians all might in one thing agree,
To leave their God to judge the human breast;
It seemed a refuge whither oft might flee
The hapless exile for his faith opprest;
And here to find his late bound conscience free,
And for the scourge and gibbet—charity.

LXXVIII.

He thought he saw the various spires ascend
Of many churches, all of different kind;
And heard the Sabbath bells harmonious blend
Tones speaking creeds that moved the various mind;
And saw the crowds still as harmonious wend
To several worhips as their faith inclined;
And felt that Deity might bend the ear,
From human nature's various chords to hear—

LXXIX.

Harmonious worship rise. From thoughts like these
Our founder past to meditate the day,
When o'er that plain, curled on the morning breeze,

The smoke should rise from many a cottage gay,
Embosomed in its groves of cherry trees;
Where robins blithe should wake the roundelay,
Whilst through the fields should grazing herds be seen,
And mowers whetting scythes in meadows green.

LXXX.

But still a cloud across his mind there came—
A doubt that seemed like superstitious fear—
No Indian throng was here with loud acclaim
To give the welcome of Whatcheer! Whatcheer!
Till then he should be tossed—so did proclaim
That nameless stranger—that mysterious seer;
But from Haup's Sachem he a grant would gain—
Such were best welcome from his subject train.

LXXXI.

Full of this thought, he turned at closing day,
And gained the humble lodge as night came down;
And scarcely could he brook the short delay,
Till Waban, coming from the white man's town,
From Massasoit, dwelling in his way,
Brought cheering welcome, or the blasting frown;
For then Religious Freedom thou wert poor,
And built thine earthly hopes on that rude sagamore,

CANTO THIRD.

No pain is keener to the ardent mind,
  Filled with sublime and glorious intents,
Than when stern judgment checks the impulse blind,
  And bids to watch the pace of slow events,
To time the action—for it seems to bind
  The etherial soul upon a fire intense,
Lit by herself within the kindling breast,
Prompting to action whilst she chains to rest.

II.

Two nights had passed and Waban dallied still;
  Williams began to doubt the red man's faith;
Quick was his foot o'er forest, vale and hill,
  His changeless eye still governing his path.
Why does he tarry? and the doubts instil
  Unjust suspicions of awak'ning wrath,
Against his purpose in the savage clan,
Whose fears e'en then on future dangers ran.

III.

But, on the following morn, whilst Williams mused,
  Still questioning the hunter's long delay,
The hut's rude entrance by the deer-skin closed
  Abruptly opened, and a warrior gay
Glided within. And to the sight unused,
  Of Keenomp trimmed as for the battle fray,
Williams recoiled—and gazed, with fixed surprise,
On the fierce savage and his fearful guise.

IV.

The eagle's plumes waved round his hair of jet
  Whose crest-like lock played lightly o'er his head;

On breast and face the war-paints harshly met—
Down from his shoulders hung his blanket red—
With seeming blood his hatchet's haft was wet,—
Its edge of death was by his girdle staid;
Bright flashed his eyes; and, ready for the strife,
Gleamed in his hand the dreadful scalping knife.

V.

He placed a packet bound in Williams' hands,
And fired his pipe, and sitting, curled its smoke;
The whilst our founder broke the hempen bands,
And through the contents sent the inquiring look.
There found he, answered, all his late commands
To Waban, ere the wigwam he forsook;
And from his spouse a brief epistle too,
Which told her sorrows since their last adieu.

VI.

How came the messengers with armed men
To search her mansion for "the heretic;"
How his escape awoke their wrath—and then
How they accused him for his feigning sick;
But with the thought consoled themselves again,
That he had perished in that tempest thick;
God's judgment just—their Israel now was free
From the vile license of his heresy.

VII.

But as he reads, the warrior starting cries:
"War! war! my brother"—Williams drops his hand,
And by the voice marks in this altered guise,
Till now unknown, the generous Waban stand:
Erect he rose, and fiercely flashed his eyes;
Whilst his grasp prest the hatchet in his band;
"Brother there's war!"—"With whom?" our founder said,
"Have I not friends among my brothers red?"

VIII.

"Haup's valiant Sachem is my brother's friend,"
Replied red Waban, "And I come before

Him and the Keenomps bold, who hither wend
Attendant on our mightiest Sagamore;
He comes to ask my brother aid to lend
'Gainst Narraganset's hatchet stained with gore;
Miantonomi lifts it o'er his head,
Gives the loud battle yell, and names our valient dead.

IX.

No space was there for Williams to reply,
Ere near the lodge he heard a trampling sound,
And warriors entered, stained with every dye,
Crested and plumed, and to their girdles bound
The knife and hatchet; whilst the battle cry
Burst from the crowds that did the lodge surround,
And seemed to light in every Keenomp's eye,
That stood within, a dreadful sympathy.

X.

Amid this train came Massasoit old,
But not too old for direst battle fray;
Strong was his arm as was his bosom bold;
His judgment, bettered by experience gray,
The wildest passions of his tribe controlled,
And checked their fury in its headlong way;
Still with the strangers he his peace maintained,
The terror of whose aid his foes restrained.

XI.

There too came Corbitant, so stern of mood,
And Annawan, who saw, in after times,
Brave Metacom, and all of kindred blood,
Slain, or enslaved and sold to foreign climes;
And strong Apannow of Pocasset's wood,
And other chiefs of names unmeet for rhymes;
And round our father, in the fearful trim
Of savage battle, thronged those warriors grim.

XII.

Each fired his pipe, and seat in silence took;
Around the room a dreadful ring they made,

Their fierce eyes stared through wreaths of dusky smoke,
And 'mid its rising clouds their plumage played;
And through the obscure their forms scarce earthly look;
They seem like fiends in their infernal shade:
Silent the vapors rose, and naught they spoke,
Till Massasoit thus the silence broke.

XIII.

"And is my brother here? What does he seek?
Tow'rd Wamponand, upon the passing wing,
A singing bird there went; its opening beak
Was by Namasket's wigwam heard to sing,
That thou art friendless, homeless, poor and weak,
Seeking protection from an Indian King.
Do the white Sagamores their vengeance wreak,
E'en as the red chiefs, on their brethren?—speak.

XIV.

Sire Williams answered, "'twas no idle song
Sung by that bird which passed Namasket near;
I am an exile these drear wilds among,
And hope for kindness from the red men here.
Oft had thy friendship to the pale-faced throng,
That first Patuxet peopled, reached my ear,*
And the tale whispered thou wouldst still be kind
To those who fly, and leave their all behind."

XV.

Then rose the tawny monarch of the wood
To speak his memory as became a chief;
And back he cast his crimson robes, and stood
With naked arm outstretched a moment brief;
Commanding silence by that attitude,
And to his words attention and belief.
Oft did he pause, his eyes on Williams fixed,
Whilst breathed his train applause his words betwixt.

XVI.

"Brother," he said, "full many a rolling year
Has cast its leaves and fruitage on the ground,

*Patuxet is the Indian name for Plymouth.

And many a Keenomp, to his country dear,
Has sate in death beneath his grassy mound,
Since first the pale Awanux kindled here
His council blaze, and so began to found
His tribes and villages, and far and near
With thundering arms, to wake the red man's fear.

XVII.

"Brother attend! When first Awanux came,
He was a child not higher than my knee;
Hunger and cold consumed and pinched his frame;
Houseless on yonder naked shore stood he;
Waves roared between him and his corn and game,
Snows clad the wilds, and winter vexed the sea;
His big canoe shrunk from the angry flood,
And death was on the barren strand he trod.

XVIII.

"Brother attend! I gave the infant food;
My lodge was open, and my fire was warm,
He gathered strength, and felt his melting blood
Restoring vigor to his wasted arm;
He grew—waxed strong—the trees began to bud—
He asked for lands a little town to form—
I gave him lands, and taught him how to plant,
To fish and hunt—for he was ignorant.

XIX.

"Brother attend! still did Awanux grow—
Still did he ask for land—I gave him more—
And more—and more—till now his hatchet's blow
Is at Namasket heard, with crash and roar
Of falling oaks, and, like the whit'ning snow,
His growing numbers spread my borders o'er;
Scarce do they leave a scant and narrow place,
Where we may spread the blanket of our race."

XX.

Here paused the chief, as if to ask reply,
Too generous he had been he seemed to say,

Or that the strangers grasped too eagerly,
Nor heeded aught their benefactor's sway;
Ne'er to the Indian did our sire deny
His share of Heaven's bequests, and to allay
The chief's suspicions, thus he answered mild
The dusky king of Pokanoket's wild.

XXI.

"Brother I know that all these lands are thine—
These rolling rivers, and these waving trees,—
From the Great Spirit came the gift divine;
And who would trespass upon grants like these?
Naught would I take, e'en if the power were mine,
Of all thy lands, lest it should Him displease;
But for just meed should thou some part resign,
Would the Great Spirit blame the deed benign?"

XXII.

"'Tis not the peag," said the sagamore,
"Nor knives, nor guns, nor garments red as blood,
That buy the lands I hold dominion o'er—
Lands that were fashioned by the red man's God;
But to my friend I give, and take no more
Than to his generous bosom may seem good;
But still we pass the belt, and for the lands,
He strengthens mine, and strengthen I his hands."

XXIII.

"Weak is my hand, brave chief," our sire replied,
Aid do I need, but none can I bestow;
Yet on that vacant space, by Seekonk's tide,
Fain would I build, and peaceful neighbors know—
But if my brother has that boon denied,
Far tow'rds the setting sun will Williams go,
And on the lands of other chief's abide,
Whose blankets are with ampler room supplied."

XXIV.

As thus our founder spake, this murmur low
Past all that savage group of warriors round,

" The stranger will to Narraganset go!"
"A hungry wolf shall in his path be found!"
Rejoined stern Corbitant, whose eyes did glow
With kindling wrath, whilst from his belt unbound
His hatchet, following his dusky span
Beneath his blanket hid—Man glanced on man.

XXV.

Again Haup's Sachem broke the fearful pause—
" Brother be wise—I gave thy brethren lands—
They smoked my pipe, and they espoused my cause;
They made me strong, and all the neighboring bands
Forsook the Narraganset Sachem's laws,*
And mine obeyed—We weakened hostile hands;
All dropt their arms and looked, but looked in vain
For my white friends to measure back the main.

XXVI.

This leaf which budded of their hope now dies—
The Narraganset warriors crest their hair—
Their hatchets keen from troubled slumbers rise,
And through Coweset their thronged edges glare;
Chiefs strike the war-post—blood is in their cries—
And their fierce yells cleave Pokanoket's air—
They count already with revengeful eyes
The future scalps of vanquished enemies.

XXVII.

War's clouds hang o'er us, and their thunders speak,
And spots of blood the skies of peace array;
The dark winged raven whets her hungry beak,
She scents the coming strife, and chides delay;
Devouring wolves peer from their dens to seek
The expected relics of the battle fray;
Earth breathes of slaughter, and the grassy plain
Thirsts for the nurture of the sanguine stain.

XXVIII.

" All seek the blood of Wampanoag brave;

*See notes to Canto Fourth.

On Seekonk's margin will the tempest burst;
Lands there I might bestow, but then that wave
Will turn all red with human slaughter first.
But still my brother and his friends are brave—
His bulwarks there, with guardian thunders pierced,
Might frown on harm—for surely he would fight,
Both for his own and for the giver's right.

XXIX.

And when the Narraganset by our arms
Is driven from the Seekonk far away,
No longer troubled by the wild alarms
Of scalping knife and tomahawk affray,
Together may we sit, free from all harms,
And smoke the calumet day after day,
And our descendants, ages yet to come,
Have but one fire—one undivided home."

XXX.

"Brother," said Williams, "thou beholdest here
Hands that no mortal's blood e'er crimsoned yet,
Oft do I lift them to the God of prayer—
Ah! how unseemly if with slaughter wet!
But to the hostile chiefs could Williams bear
The pipe of peace—thy snow-white calumet,
And quench the flames of strife, how better far,
Than win thy lands by all-devouring war!

XXXI.

With Waban for my guide, in friendly guise,
Sachem, I would the arduous task essay
To soothe those ancient feuds by counsel wise,
And quell the wrath born ages far away;
Were this not better than the sacrifice
Of armies whole, slain in the bloody fray?
Then might I plant, and, in each neighboring clan,
Meet with a friend where'er I meet a man.

XXXII.

"Hah! Yengee"—said the Sachem, "would'st thou go

To soothe the hungry panther scenting blood?
Say! canst thou bid Pawtucket's downward flow
Turn and run backward to Woonsocket's wood?
The path to peace is shut—the eager foe
Sharpens his darts, and treads his measures rude,
And through the trembling groves the war-whoop trills
From bleak Manisses to the Nipnet hills.*

XXXIII.

"Yengee! thou seest these Wampanoags brave—
They are my keenomps in the battle fray;
Would it become Haup's sagamore to crave
Inglorious rest for warriors strong as they?
They shrink from naught, but from a dastard's grave;
Bound to the stake upon their lips would play
The scornful smile—when would the saying cease,
"The Wampanoag women sued for peace?"

XXXIV.

Williams to this—The spirit over all
Holds earth in thought, and moulds the hearts of men;
At his command may torrents backward roll,
And the hare gambol in the panther's den—
In Him I trust, and in his strength my soul
Is more than armies—let your brother then
Ask for himself, if not for thee or thine,
That on these lands the sky of peace may shine.

XXXV.

How could your brother plant, where all around
War's tempest raged, and poured its showers of blood?
Where from each thicket burst the war whoop's sound,
And death in ambush couched in every wood?
When would the footsteps of his friends be found,
Passing along the blood-stained solitude,
To bring their all—their dearer far than life,
Beneath the uplifted axe and scalping knife?

* Manisses—Block-Island.

XXXVI.

Upon our father's words to meditate,
That wise old chief now paused him for a space;
He had protracted thus the shrewd debate,
And memory strained his bounties to retrace,
Not as our sire first deemed from growing hate,
But to enlarge upon his present grace,
And make his gift right worthily be thought
Of the much needed aid, which now he vainly sought.

XXXVII.

"Keenomps!" at length exclaimed the Sagamore,
"Shall our white brother, not for me or mine,
But for himself, seek Narraganset's shore,
Disperse the clouds, and give the sun to shine
From the blue sky of peace?—Our wounds are sore,
But hatchets none too keen, and our design
Delay may favor if the Yengee light
His council fire, and gathering friends invite.

XXXVIII.

"His bow is broken, and his knife now dull,
But, when around him shall his warriors throng,
Its sharpened edge will thirst to peel the skull
Of Narraganset foe—his arm, grown strong,
Will bend a mighty bow, and send the soul
Of many a hostile Sachem to prolong
The cry of vengeance from the tribes of ghosts,
Who rove unsheltered round Sowaniu's coasts.

XXXIX.

"On Seekonk's marge, our battle-stained frontier,
His town will rise, and valorous will he feel;
The foe must pass him if he strike us here;
Our brother then will hang upon his heel,
And check his progress, and salute his ear
With the big thunders and the musket's peal;
Lo! from the east the Tarrateen no more
Dare pass the Yengee by the ocean shore."

XL.

As ceased the chief, a fierce smile lit the eyes
And curled the muscles of those men of blood;
They feared the number of their enemies;
This hope was cheering, and all answered—good!
All save stern Corbitant, whose visage is
Dark and portentous as a slumbering flood,
Whose silent bosom holds the imaged storm,
And seems the tempest that the skies deform.

XLI.

Then rose each keenomp in his turn and spake;
Each said his knife was sharp, his hands were strong;
But still such counsel as his chief might take
He should deem wise, and so advise his throng;
At length stern Corbitant did silence break—
But first unsheathed he from his leathern thong
His scalping knife, and then a circle true,
With its bare point upon the earth he drew.

XLII.

"So move the hunters," the grim sachem said;
Then near the centre made of scores a few;
"Here do the moose and deer the thickets thread
To the sure death from those whose feet pursue;
Do not the yengees thus around us spread?
Are we not hunted thus our forests through?
Will Haup's brave sachem yield Awanux aid,
While weep the spirits of his kindred dead?"

XLIII.

"Go! thou dark Corbitant!" the old chief cried,
"Unarmed the stranger seeks our vacant land,
Far from his friends he'd plant by Seekonk's tide—
His blood within the hollow of our hand—
When to the stranger has a chief denied
Food, fire, and space his blanket to expand?
Hunted by him!—when come his friends he may,
If timid deer we are, turn off the beasts of prey.

XLIV.

The white man goes, but for himself alone,
To ask that peace between the nations be,
And if the belt of Narraganset won
He bring to Haup, 'twill be received by me.
Now do I charge you, keenomps, all as one,
That on his path no lurking wolf send ye,
Who dares with purpose fell, his way to haunt,
Dies by this hand, e'en if 'twere Corbitant.

XLV.

Do thou swift Waban with the yengee go—
And point the way to Narraganset's clan;
If thou durst walk before the bended bow,
Bring back the talks, that we the words may scan;
In all things else to him obedience show;
He is thy sachem, be thou Winiams man.*
But it were safe that thou the pipe should bear,
Without that painted face and plumed hair."

XLVI.

Then Williams past his strings of Wampum bright,
And to each keenomp some slight present made;
Each took his gift, and mimicing the white,
His *taubut* gave, and uncouth bow essayed;†
And e'en grim Corbitant showed pleasure slight,
For something like a smile his face arrayed,
As he beheld the wreath our founder flung,
Where glittering on his breast the bauble hung.

XLVII.

To Haup's old chief a girdle bright gave he;
Well graced his swarthy loins the tinsel wire;
And every warrior was in highest glee,
To see his chieftain in such brave attire;
Then filing from the lodge in fit degree,
The group's did pass, and through the woods retire,

*The Wampanoags could not pronounce the letter L, but used N in the place of it. † Taubut—thanks.

The chief appointing Haup where he might see
What issue hung on this strange embassy.

XLVIII.

Waban alone with Williams tarried there—
And for the journey soon the comrades trim;
The red-man doft his plumes, and loosed his hair,
And cleansed his visage of its colours grim;
Our founder chose his Indian gifts to bear,
And pipe of peace as well becoming him:
And forth they sallied, as from central sky,
The sun looked down between the branches high.

XLIX.

Before went Waban, and his nimble feet
Passed swift 'neath ancient grove—o'er woodland glade,
Behind, his long dark hair and scarlet sheet
Streamed on the breezes that his swiftness made;
Oft did his glancing form from sight retreat
Behind the crags—behind the thicket's shade—
And then his voice, along the echoing wood,
Told when he paused, or where his way pursued.

L.

At length upon Pawtucket's marge they stood—
They heard the thunder of his falls below;
Though narrow was the pass, yet deep the flood,
And frail the ice to bridge such dangerous flow;
But on the bank a giant of the wood,
A towering hemlock, waved its lofty bough—
Waban his hatchet to the trunk applied;
It bowed—it fell and bridged the sounding tide.

LI.

On this upstaid, from bank to bank they passed;
And now they trod lands 'neath the hostile sway,
And round the travellers night was gathering fast,
And dark and doubtful grew their devious way;
Upon the ground their blankets now they cast,
And light the fire, and wait the coming day,

When safer they their journey may pursue,
And greet the hostile chiefs in season due.

LII.

Williams that night lay on the snow-clad ground,
With nought above him but the starry blue,
In the parched maize, and fountain pure he found
A sweet repast, that woke devotion true;
For whilst he saw the human soul still bound—
Her wings enthralled, though not her eagle view—
One pious prayer made every suffering light,
That he might cleave her bonds, and speed her heaven-ward flight.

LIII.

The red man smoked his pipe, or trimmed the fire,
And many a tale he to our father told,
Of barbarous battles, and of slaughter dire,
That on Pawtucket's marge there chanced of old;
How still the son inherited from sire
The same fierce passions, in like bosom bold;
And wondered how his pale-faced Sachem dare
Betwixt such angry chiefs the pipe to bear.

LIV.

They slept at last, though piercing cold that night,
And round them howled the hungry beasts of prey;
Nor broke their slumber, till the dawning light
Gleamed in the East—then they resumed their way;
Congealed to ice, and glancing far and bright,
The snows sent back the rising solar ray;
Mooshausick's wave was bridged from shore to shore,
And on the solid flood they passed secure.

LV.

Westward till now his course did Waban draw—
He shunned Weybosset the accustomed ford,
Where dwelt dark Chepian's priest, that grim pawaw,
Who well he knew the Yengee's faith abhorred,
And might perchance if he our founder saw,

Bearing the pipe of peace, but ill accord
With such kind purpose, and on evil wing,
To Narraganset's throng strange omens bring.

LVI.

Now down the western bank their course they speed;
They pass Pawtuxet in their onward way;
And now does Indian town to town succeed,
Some large, some small, in populous array;
And here and there, was many an ample mead
Where the green maize had grown in summer's ray;
And forth was poured, where'er they passed along,
Of naked children many a gazing throng.

LVII.

Their small sunk eyes, like sparks from burning coal,
On the white stranger stared; but when they spied
The Wampanoag, they began to roll
With all the fury—mimicing the pride,
Of their fierce fathers—and the savage soul,
Nursed e'en in youth on thoughts in carnage died,
Instinctively—with simultaneous swell,
Sent from the lips their unfledged battle yell.

LVIII.

Their little bows they twanged with threat'ning mien,
Their little war-clubs shook to tell their ires;
Their mimic scalping knives they brandished keen,
And acted o'er the stories of their sires;
And had their fathers at this moment seen
(For they were gone to Potowomet's fires,)
Our founder's guide, they might have caught the tone
Of their young urchins, and the hatchet thrown.

LIX.

Still village after village smoked—the woods
All swarmed with life as onward still he fared;
For numbers great, but for such multitudes,
By no conjecture, was his mind prepared;
Was it for him to tamper with the moods

Of these fierce Savages, whose arms were bared,
Whose souls already ripe, and bodies trim,
For the wild revelry of slaughter grim?

LX.

How could he hope a safe abiding place,
Far in these forests, and his friends so few—
'Mid the blood-nurtured numbers of a race,
Who naught of laws divine or human knew—
Their wars oft prompted by some wild caprice,
Their hearts hard as the tomahawk they threw!—
Would his fond rashness be by Heaven carest?
Would God nurse zephyrs on the whirlwind's breast?

LXI.

Whilst thus his mind did meditations fill,
Still moving onward, vexed with cares and fears,
He gained the summit of a towering hill,
And downward glanced.—Far stretched beneath appears
A woodland plain; and murmurs harsh and shrill,
As from accordant voices, on his ears
Rise from the central groves, and o'er the trees,
Smokes from a hundred fires curl on the morning breeze.

LXII.

Now to the sight, through leafless boughs, revealed,
Now hid, where thicker branches wove their skreen,
Bounding and glancing, in swift circles wheeled,
Men painted, plumed and armed with weapons sheen,
Now flashing clear—by thickets now concealed;
Glimmering again and tost with threatening mien,
The lifted tomahawks and lances bright
Seemed to anticipate the joys of fight.

LXIII.

Mixt with the sound of voices and of feet,
Alternate, slow and fast the hollow drum
Its measured humdrum, or rolled numbers beat,
And ruled in various mood the general hum—
Now slow the sounds—now rapid their repeat—

Till at a sudden pause, did thrilling come
That tremulous, far undulating swell—
As from a thousand lips—the warrior's yell.

LXIV.

And Williams started—for that dreadful howl—
Whoop, shout, or yell, whate'er its fitting style,
As through the woods did its fierce echoes roll,
Filled every glade and valley, for a while,
With seeming demons—murderous as the soul
Of the red warrior leaping to despoil
(His knife bright glancing through the shuddering air)
The dying victim of his tuft of hair.

LXV.

An ashen hue came over Waban's face—
It dwelt a moment—vanished—and he said—
"The Narragansets there their war-dance trace,
They count our scalps, and name our kindred dead—
This heart grows big, it cannot ask for peace,
It rather rot upon a gory bed,
Than hear the spirits of its sires complain,
And call for blood—but ever call in vain."

LXVI.

"Waban," said Williams, "dost thou fear to go?—
And wilt thou leave thy Yengee chief alone?
How will thy Sagamore the speeches know,
If homeward, now, his messenger should run?—
Not thou, but I will ask the haughty foe,
To quench his fires, and quell the dance begun;
But for thy safety, thou the calumet
Shall bear beside me, till the chiefs are met."

LXVII.

"Waban," (replied he,) "never shook with fear,
Nor left his Sachem when he needed friends.
It is the thought of many a by-gone year,
That kindles wrath within my breast, and sends
Through all this frame, my boiling blood on fire!—

Waban still on his pale-faced chief attends,
But bears no pipe—the warrior's pride
Prompts him to die, as have his fathers died."

LXVIII.

" Waban at least will smoke the pipe awhile,"
Said Williams gravely to his kindling guide,
" Its fragrant breath is as on billows oil;
It calms the troubled waves of memory's tide."
The grateful offer seemed to reconcile
The peaceful emblem to the warrior's pride:
He fills the bowl—he wakes the kindling fire,
And o'er his head the curling clouds aspire.

LXIX.

And whilst he sits, the sylvan muse will string
Her rustic harp to wake no gentle strain
Of barbarous camps, and savage chiefs who sing
The song of vengeance to their raptured train;
Of council's shrewd, and wizard priests that bring
Strange omens, dark dominion to maintain;—
Of incantations dire and of that spell
By Sesek wrought—which seemed the feat of Hell.

CANTO FOURTH.

I.

The twain has left the height and sought the glade
Where the red warriors wheel the martial dance.
The thick young cedars form'd a barricade
Which hid the travellers in their still advance;
But penetrating through their denser shade,
Soon father Williams sent his searching glance
O'er the rude camp.—And there on every side
He sees the dancers round the blazes glide!

II.

Hundreds on hundreds swarmed that glade, I ween,
With painted visages and plumed hair;
There bristled darts, there glittered lances sheen,
And there the brandished knives cast thick on air
Wild fiery circles—whilst with threatening mien,
Their dark locks streaming and their muscles bare,
The dancers circled o'er the thundering ground,
And leaping, breathed the hard, harsh, aspirated sound.

III.

But chiefly round the central pile the throngs
(Where plied the bravest chiefs their dances rude,)
Stood listening to their Sachem's battle songs,
Or when they ceased in leaps his lance pursued;
The tumult swelling, till their tortured lungs
Wrung to the highest effort, filled the wood,
With the wild war-whoop, tremulous and shrill—
Then pausing suddenly the throngs were still.

IV.

Till from the groups another Sachem s
To tell his deeds, and count his foe-
Lancing the war-post as his numbers r
As if he slew his vanquished foe aga
Whilst on his words the listening warri
And drink with greedy ears the bloo
Cheering at times, with acclamations r
The butcheries counted in their song

V.

Amid the tumult of this boisterous rou
Williams, unmarked, had gained th
When suddenly an unaccustomed sho
Past through the groups around the
And staring eyes, and pointing hands,
Announced the strangers to their view betrayed;
Then died that hum, like the past whirlwind's roar,
When the dust rises on the distant shore.

VI.

And hushed were all—glance past from man to man,
And wonder strange in every visage grew,
Till through the camp the sullen murmur ran;
"Pale-faced Awanux! Wampanoag too!"
And at their words to grasp their arms began
The kindling warriors, all that gathering through,
When, lo! they opened like a parting tide,
And suddenly again their murmurs died.

VII.

And Williams paused—for, from that opening crowd,
A chief approaching trod the breathing plain;
Bold was his port—his bearing high and proud,
A lance of length did his right hand sustain;
The glittering wampum did his crown enshroud,
His nodding plumage wore a crimson stain;
His armlets gleamed—his belt, with figures traced,
Suspended skirts with purple peag laced.

VIII.

His naked limbs were stained a sable hue,
His naked chest and face a crimson red;
Streamed backward from his brows two ribbons blue,
And with his long black hair wild dalliance made;
Suspended from his belt half sheathed from view,
His scalping knife and tomahawk were staid;
His sunken eyes 'neath forehead lowering proud,
Glowed like two stars beneath a thunder cloud.

IX.

He with majestic stride and lofty gate,
Approached our founder and his dusky guide,
Who in half tone could but ejaculate,
"Miantonomi!" and his Indian pride
Choked further utterance; but with form elate,
Grasping his axe—with nostrils spreading wide,
Self-poised he stood; and seemed but to await
The approaching chief—who glanced disdainful hate.

X.

Our founder chid his guide, and, o'er his head,
He raised the calumet to speak the while,
That a white hand o'er kindling warriors shed
The love of peace—well did the act beguile
The sachem's wrath; he deemed that Waban played
His nation's part, and, with a scornful smile,
Turned his fierce glance and to our founder said,
"Awanux!" has he come to hear the song?
Our darts are thirsty and our arms are strong!"—

XI.

"Sachem," said Williams, "'tis the cause of Him—
That great Good Spirit whom we all adore—
Who never smiles upon the contests grim,
Of his red children in the field of gore—
That brings me hither, in unwarlike trim,
To crave thy friendship, and of thee implore,
That these dark clouds which spots of blood contain,

Leave the blue sky, and peace shine forth again."

XII.

As thus he spake, the calumet of peace
Presented he that warlike sagamore,
Who clinched his hands, and backward stept a pace,
"Nay! Nay! Awanux, Wampanoag gore
Will M'antanomi's feet in battle trace
Ere dies another moon—he hears no more—
'Tis not for him amid these keenomps bold
To talk of peace—that suits his uncle old."

XIII.

Williams to this: "Then the gray chief is wise;
His glance is forward, and around him turns;
But o'er the young chief clouds of anger rise,
He sees but backward, and his vengeance burns;
Shew me to him who looks with wisdom's eyes
Upon the nations, and most truly learns,
From the past toils and dangers of his life,
To prize the pipe above the scalping knife."

XIV.

At this his bosom the young Sachem struck,
And braced his frame, and flashed his kindling eye—
"This breast is generous," thus he silence broke,
"Of like for like abundant its supply;
Of good and bad it hath an ample stock,
It cheers its friend, it blasts its enemy—
Ten favors does it for each favor done,
And ten darts sends for every hostile one.

XV.

"Follow the war-chief—'mid yon heavy cloud
Of warriors grim in arms and martial dyes,
Sits the gray Sachem in his numbers proud,
But prouder still in counsels old and wise—"
He spake and strode toward the lowering crowd—
Williams to calmness did his guide advise;
And both, with cautious and slow step, pursued

The Sachem tow'rd that fearful multitude.

XVI.

Not more horrific gleams the glistering snake,
When coiled on glowing rocks he basking lies,
And at the approaching step his rattles shake,
And flies his forky tongue, and burn his eyes,
Than shown that crowd of warriors round the stake,
Arrayed in murderous arms, and martial guise;
Their hollow murmurs kindling through the whole
The sympathetic wrath of one inspiring soul.

XVII.

Close, circle within circle, deep they stood;
Wild stared their eyes from faces stained for strife,
Their lances quivered like a steely wood,
And on the whetstone played the scalping knife;
All looked—breathed—moved—as if the thought of blood
Had warmed grim statues into human life—
Whilst to the crowd surrounding masses rolled
And groups still shift, and changeful hues unfold.

XVIII.

When near the gathered crowd the Sachem trod,
He raised his hand, and, pausing, briefly spoke;
"Keenomps! Awanux, prompted by his God,
Brings back the pipe the Wampanoag broke.
Our fathers ever answered good with good,
Nor on the bearer of the pipe e'er shook
The storm of vengeance—listen to his talk—
He brings no message from the tomahawk.

XIX.

As thus he spake, the sullen murmurs died,
And a deep silence hushed the multitude;
Again he moved, and at his onward stride
The deep mass parted like a severing flood;
Opening on either hand, the living tide
Rolled forth the space through which our founder trod.
Their breath alone he heard—like the hoarse breeze
Foreboding tempests to the shuddering trees.

XX.

At last he came where the old Sachems sate,
Who formed the Narraganset senate grave;
Renowned were they, once in the fierce debate
Of battle dire, as bravest of the brave;
But now, as guardians of their little state,
To younger hands they prudent counsel gave.
Their youth was gone, but their experience sage
Gave thrice its value in a wise old age.

XXI.

On settles, raised around the mounting blaze,
Sate gray Wauontom, Keenomp, Sagamore—
But chiefly strikes our founder's searching gaze
The sage Canonicus, whose tresses hoar
Float on the passing breeze—whose brow displays
The care-worn soul in many a furrowed score;
But the bright eyes, that 'neath those brows still glow,
Show what he was full sixty years ago.

XXII.

Beside him lay the calumet of peace;
It was his sceptre 'mid the din of arms;
No martial dyes did, on his visage trace
The lines of wrath—for him they had no charms—
The neyhom's mantle did his shoulders grace,*
Its ample folds repelled the winter's harms;
At every movement changing in the sun,
From plume to plume, its gorgeous glories run.

XXIII.

Mute were the chiefs, they seemed to meditate,
Nor turned their heads, nor threw a glance aside,
When on the offered mat our founder sate,
And near behind him came his watchful guide—
Then spread the warriors round in circle great,
And earth did 'neath their swarming numbers hide;

* The Neyhom, or wild turkey.—The fairest plumes of this bird, attached to skins, were used in manufacturing their richest apparel.—See note.

They sit, kneel, stand, or climb the forest boughs,
Until one wall of life around the council grows.

XXIV.

When ceased the crowd to stir, and died their hum,
Long on our father did the old chief gaze;
At length he said—"and has Awanux come?
He's welcome to the red man's council blaze.
What news brings he from the pale stranger's home?
Or from the dog that near his wigwam strays?
Our young men see the pipe—what does it seek?
Our ears are open—let Awanux speak.—"

XXV.

Sire Williams rose—a thousand staring eyes
Were on him fixed—a thousand ears were spread
To catch his words, whilst all around him lies
That mass of life, hushed in a calmness dread,
Like that of dark Ontario, when the skies
Are mustering their tempests overhead,
And the round moon looks through the gathering storm,
And, glassed 'mong tempest shapes, sees in the flood her form.

XXVI.

He paused a space—at last he thus began:
"Sachem of many moons, and wise as gray!
Well knowest thou how short the life of man—
These aged oaks have witnessed the decay
Of many a generation of thy clan.
They saw them melt like vernal snows away—
Why should we then, by spreading wo and grief,
Make this short life as wretched as 'tis brief?

XXVII.

Still—to select the most unmingled goods,
Whilst life endures, is well for man to do—
And human liberty, in all its moods,
Is the high gift of the great Manittoo—
For this I wander to these distant woods;

For this from persecution's brands I flew,
And left my kindred, social fire and home,
Through stormy skies and snowy wilds to roam.

XXVIII.

Some thoughts of mine, that the Great Spirit might
Rule his own kingdom better than frail men,
Awoke the anger of my brothers white,
And sent me forth to seek some distant glen,
Where I, unharmed, my council fire might light,
And give its freedom to my kindred—when,
Beneath the tree of peace, the red men should
Smoke the white pipe in friendly neighborhood.

XXIX.

On Seekonk's marge I chose a lovely glade,
It forms the bank nearest the rising sun;
The Wampanoag would the grant have made,
But at that moment did the rumor run,
That all Coweset was in arms arrayed
Against that chief, and had the dance begun—
Then paused your brother—for he would not bring
His friends to sit beneath the hatchet's swing.

XXX.

Then did he take Haup's calumet to crave
That peace between the warring nations be;
Not that the Wampanoag warriors brave
Sought from the Narraganset storm to flee;
But that no guilty stain, on Seekonk's wave,
Rebuke the Pokanoket chief, or thee,
Drawn forth by darts, perchance from heedless bows,
Confounding pale-faced friends with warring foes.

XXXI.

My motives these—now let the wise chief tell
What wrongs he suffers; what redress he seeks.
Do not his buried kindred slumber well?
What murdered victim's ghost for vengeance shrieks—
Sends through the hollow woods the warrior's yell,

And from its iron sleep the hatchet wakes?
Or does some impious tongue his anger brave,
By speaking names made sacred by the grave?"

XXXII.

Then passed a murmur through that concourse wide,
And man on man cast the enquiring eye,
At length the old chief laid his pipe aside,
And, musing, sate as pondering his reply;
Then slowly rose, and drew the plumed hide
From his right shoulder, and, with stature high,
Stretched forth his long bare arm and shrivelled hand,
And pointing round the sky-encircled land,

XXXIII.

"As far," he said, and solemn was his tone,
"As from Coweset's hill the hunter's sight
Goes tow'rd the Nipnet—tow'rd the rising sun—
And o'er the mighty billows foaming bright,
Where bleak Manisses' shores they thunder on,
Moved Narraganset warriors—till the White
Came from the Orient, o'er the waters blue,
And brought his thunders in the big canoe.

XXXIV.

"Yes, ere he came, Pocasset's martial band
Did at our bidding come to fight the foe,
And the tall warriors of the Nipnet land
Rushed with swift foot to bend our battle bow;
And e'en the dog of Haup did cringing stand
Beside our Wigwam, and his tribute show—
Then were we strong—we fought the Maquas fell,
And laughed to hear the bordering Pequot's yell.

XXXV.

"But Yengee hear—the pale-faced strangers came—
No runners told us that they trod our shores;
Near the big waters rose their council flame,
And to it ran our Eastern Sagamores;
Haup's dog forgot the Narraganset name,

And eat the offal cast from white men's doors,
Moved at their heels, and after him he drew
The strong Pocassets, and the Nipnets too.

XXXVI.

"Then the fierce Pequots on our borders broke,
We sent the belt to claim the accustomed aid;
The rebel chiefs the angry hatchet shook,
They were the Yengee's men not ours; they said;
We stood alone; and, like a steadfast rock,
Turned back the torrent to its fountain head,
Which else had swept those sluggard tribes away,
That by Awanux's wigwam slumbering lay.

XXXVII.

"These are our wrongs, and who can ever mend
The belt thus broken by the rebel train?
The falling waters with earth's bosom blend,
And who shall hold them in his palm again?
Against the common foe our warriors spend
Their blood like rivers—who can wake the slain?—
Heal up the wounds for other men endured—
Give back that blood which has their thankless truce secured?"

XXXVIII.

The sachem ceased, and mingled murmurs ran
Through all that crowd; "he speaks a manittoo!
Base Wampanoag! we'll devour that clan,
And drive the Yengees back o'er ocean blue!"
And through the concourse motions mixed began,
With clash of arms, and twanging of the yew;
But when they saw our founder rise again,
Mute stillness hushed the murmurs of the train.

XXXIX.

"Brother," said Williams, "thou art old and wise;
And know'st the pipe is better than the dart.
The barb can drink the blood of enemies;
But the pipe's conquest is the foeman's heart;

It gives to us his strength and energies,
And makes the Pequot from our paths depart.
This, to the good, gives triumph long and just,
That, to the bad, a victory over dust.

XL.

"If then my brother can subdue his foes,
By the white pipe, he will be very strong!
The offending chiefs, once more, will bend his bows,
And shout around his fire their battle song;
No more will Pequot harass his repose;
Or Maqua yells resound these hills among—
See not my brothers whence all this distrust?—
The belt between them and the Yengees rust.

XLI.

"Hearken a space—Awanux is not weak—
Betwixt him and Haup's chief, the chain is bright;
If thou on him a finger's vengeance wreak,
The conscious chain will vibrate to the White,
And, roused from slumber, will the big guns speak,
And flames will flash from every woodland height—
Pause, brother, pause—and to the pale faced train
Extend thy friendship, and keep bright the chain.

XLII.

"But hearken still—thy brother knows no guile—
His tongue speaks truly what his heart conceives;
Against the Pequots do your bosoms boil,
And for the Pequot deeds Awanux grieves;
Their hands are laden with the white man's spoils—
Their fingers, crimsoned with the Yengee lives;
Soon will the big guns to their nation speak,
And, in their aid, mayst thou just vengeance take.

XLIII.

"Thou wouldst compel the Wampanoag's aid
To guard thy borders, and chastise thy foes;
But will my brothers give me to persuade
Them to win more than warriors armed with bows?

Even Awanux, in his strength arrayed,
Whose thunder roars, and whose red lightning glows—
Make him thy friend, and victory follows sure.
And Narraganset rests in peace secure."

XLIV.

The old chief downward glanced—the warriors round—
Some in stern silence sate of doubtful mood;
Some grinned a scornful smile—some fiercely frowned,
And others toiled to sharp their darts for blood;
At length the sachem, raising from the ground
His piercing eyes, full in the visage viewed
Our anxious founder—"thou dost speak," he said,
"The words of wisdom, but these ears are dead—

XLV.

"Dead to a Yengee's voice—When did the tongue
Of the white stranger fail to speak most fair?
When did his actions not his speeches wrong,
And lay the falsehood of his bosom bare?
Fain would I die in peace and leave this throng
To send their glory down to ages far;
But still I feel the stranger's grasping hand,
And still he soothes me with his accents bland.

XLVI.

"If true he speak—that should his actions show—
May not his heart be darker than yon cloud;
And yet his words white as its falling snow?
Still, if his speech were true, and not a shroud
To hide dark thought, then might these gray hairs go
Down to the grave in peace—and of my blood,
All, whilst the rivers roll, and rain descends,
Live with the Yengee kind and loving friends."

XLVII.

'Twas for our founder now in turn to pause,
He felt his weakness at rebuff so stern;
The kid had leaped beneath the lion's paws—
Whose fangs began to move, and eyes to burn;
At length he said, "what bold encroachment draws

The sachem's mind into this deep concern?
How have the Yengees given thee offence?
What deeds of theirs have marred thy confidence?"

XLVIII.

At this, the sachem from his girdle took
His snow-white pipe, and snapt the stem in twain:
"They came intruders, and the pipe was broke,"
Said the stern sachem, and it snapt again;
"Our subject chiefs their ruling chiefs forsook,
And they were sheltered by the stranger's train.
This fragment shows the serpent's skin they sent,
Filled with round thunders to our royal tent.

XLIX.

"This shows, they raised their bulwarks high and proud,
And poised their big guns at our distant home.
This, upon Haup, when raged our battle loud,
How their round thunders made that battle dumb.
This, the fire-water how they have bestowed,
And with its madness have our youth o'ercome.
This, how amid the Pequot nation they
Build the square lodge, and whet him to the fray.

L.

"This, with the Maqua how a league they made,
And filled with arms his all-destroying hand.
This, how they claim right over quick and dead;
Our fathers' buried bones—their children's land.
This, how the earth grows pale, as fast they spread
From glade to glade, like snow from Wamponand,
When borne o'er ocean on the sounding gales,
It crowns the hills and whitens through the vales.

LI.

"Take thou the fragments—count their numbers well—
Ten times complains our violated right;
They'll help thy memory, and perchance will tell,
Ten causes have we to distrust the white;
Scarce can the grave our fathers' spirits quell,

They come complaining in the dreams of night;
Ten times the pipe was by the strangers broke,
Ten times the hatchet from its slumbers woke."

LII.

Williams the fragments took, and, counting ten,
He promptly answered with this calm reply;
"Sachem, some charity is due to men,
Who tread upon thy pipe unwittingly.
Long had the waters tossed those wanderers, when,
Hungry and cold, they came thy borders nigh;
And, sachem, they were ignorant of thy race,
They only sought a safe abiding place.

LIII.

And this they found in that deserted strand,
Where slept the dead—where living men were not;
They knew no wrong in this—a rightful hand
Came, and gave welcome to the vacant spot,
Each sachem seemed as sovereign of his band,
They took his belt; for 'twas a token brought
Of friendly greeting—who can this condemn—
They aid the Whites—the Whites in turn aid them.

LIV.

Bound in the skin of the great sachem snake,
My brother sent his barbs, but to his foe
Awanux took the challenge by mistake,
And let his bullets for an answer go;
They deemed the sachem angry, and did take
Some wise precaution 'gainst a secret blow;
They raise their bulwarks, and their guns they poise;
This was respect to sovereign brave and wise.

LV.

No leagues have they with the fierce Maqua made,
Nor with the Pequot, hostile is the race;
But if my brothers, for the fight arrayed,
O'er Pokanoket's borders speed their pace,
I dare not say they would forego the aid

Of any tribe, that would thy battle face;
Mohegans, Pequots, Tarrateens would fly
To join their force, and swell their battle cry.

LVI.

To these six fragments of the pipe I've spoke;
Take them again, if I have answered well;
But those which tell me that the stem was broke
By the fire-water, and of what befell
Thee upon Haup—of claims, thou canst not brook,
Made, by those strangers from the nations pale,
To these broad forests as their own domain—
These will I ask Awanux to explain.

LVII.

"This fragment tells me that his numbers grow;
That they are spreading fast, from glade to glade;
If the Great Spirit does increase bestow,
Will the wise sachem that great Power upbraid?
The lands they take, well does my brother know,
They fairly purchase of the nations red;
E'en thus would I on Seekonk's marge abide,
If peaceful nations dwelt on either side.

LVIII.

"On Seekonk's bank, betwixt my brothers white,
And the red nations I might friendly stand,
And help them still to understand aright,
Whate'er was doubtful from each other's hand;
The chain of friendship hold, and keep it bright,
And strengthen thus all Narraganset's band;
Till 'gainst our common foes, we all unite,
And conquer safety through resistless might.

LIX.

"This question seeks the sachem's plain reply:
Takes he the pipe—lays he the axe aside?
Have I his peace, or does he peace deny,
Nor in my honest counsels aught confide?—
Still chooses he the doubtful strife to try,

And brave the Yengees with his foes allied?—
Say—can he listen to an exiled man,
Whose words and deeds might still befriend his clan?"

LX.

"Brother," the sachem said in milder tone,
"Six fragments of the pipe as well explained
My willing hand receives—I ponder on
The last in doubt—the three, thou hast retained;
Send to Awanux—may he answer soon,
And shew our blindness has of them complained;
Thy heart seems open, and its speech is brave;
Queries of weight demand an answer grave.

LXI.

Large is our regal lodge, and furnished well
With skins of beaver, bear and buffalo;
Nausamp and venison is its royal meal;
And its warm fire is like the summer's glow:
There, with that Wampanoag shalt thou dwell,
And all our comforts in full safety know;
The whilst, our old chiefs shall in council great,
Upon thy questions gravely meditate.

LXII.

Here closed the long debate, and, from the ground,
Rose the thronged warriors, and hoarse murmurs past
Through all that concourse, like the hollow sound
Of Narraganset's waters, when the blast
Begins to roll the tumbling billows round
The rock-bound cape, which had so lately glassed
Its imaged self—its pendant crags and wood—
In the calm bosom of the silent flood.

CANTO FIFTH.

Deep in the dale's sequestered solitude,
Skreened from the winter's storm and chilling blast,
By branching cedars and thick underwood,
With their brown shadows ever overcast,
Old Narraganset's regal wigwam stood,
Where dwelt her hoary chief, whilst still might last
The stern dominion of the freezing North
To chain his warriors from the work of wrath.

II.

And near it rose an ample council hall,
Where oft the Narraganset senate sate,
When came the wise men, at their sachem's call,
On great emprises to deliberate;
And still within the shade were shelters all
His grave advisers to accommodate;
And, with the savage as with men polite,
Such kind provisions did delays invite.

III.

Here father Willams must a space remain,
And, with kind accents born of feelings mild,
Soothe the stern natures of that savage train,
His destined neighbors in that barbarous wild;
Remove distrust and confidence obtain,
Until suspicion and grim wrath despoiled
Of all their terrors, leave the vanquished mind
To generous friendship and full faith inclined.

IV.

Day after day, he past from man to man,
Whom e'er of note the mightier sachems swayed,
And, to the chieftains of each martial clan,
In paints all grim—in horrid arms arrayed—
He talked of peace, then o'er the dangers ran,
Were war against the Wampanoag made;
And then intreated that their friendly eyes
Might view his smoke on Seekonk's margin rise.

V.

Betwixt the tribes, on either side the stream,
Still he the belt would hold—the pipe would bear—
But never in his hand should lightning gleam
For either sachem when he rushed to war;
And with the Yengees still it might beseem
Him to promote an understanding fair,
Till wide the tree of peace its branches spread,
And white and red men smoke beneath its shade.

VI.

But chiefly he did this free converse hold
With M'antonomi, sachem young and brave,
And great Canonicus, so sage and old,
And in his speech deliberate and grave.
One eve they sate—the storm without was cold—
'Twas ere the council the decision gave—
And thus the converse past among the three,
The questions simple and the answers free.

VII.

MIANTONOMI.

Why will my brother dwell amid our foes,
Yet seek from us a peaceful neighborhood?
May we not think he'll bend their battle bows,
And thirst like them for Narraganset's blood?
Why has he Seekonk's eastern border chose,
And not surveyed Mooshausick's winding flood?

Its banks are green—its forests waving fair—
Its fountains cool—the deer abundant there.

VIII.

WILLIAMS.

Ne'er will I dwell among my brothers' foes,
To make them friends is now thy brother's toil;
Too weak am I to bend their battle-bows,
Had I the heart for such unseemly broil.
The forest fair that by Mooshausick grows,
Would long withstand the hardy woodman's toil.
The Seekonk's marge will easy tillage yield,
And soon the spiry maize adorn its ample field.

IX.

CANONICUS.

How could my brother's thoughts his friends offend?
Why flies he to the red from faces pale?
How can he still the nations red befriend?
What can his speeches with his foes avail?—
No arms he bears—no Yengees him attend—
How dares his foot to print this distant vale;
The path was shut between the nations red—
How dared my brother on that path to tread?

X.

WILLIAMS.

The white man labors to enthral the mind—
He will not let its thoughts of God be free;
I come the soul's hard bondage to unbind,
And clear her passage to the Deity:
The pale faced foes, whom I have left behind,
Would still refuse no favor done by me.
I trusted God would guard his servant's head,
Open all paths and sooth my brothers red.

XI.

CANONICUS.

Thy generous confidence has on me won,
That ope'd my ears, to other Yengees deaf.

Brother, the spirit of my son is gone—
I burned my lodge to speak my mighty grief—
If thou art true I am not left alone—
Some comfort is there for the gray-haired chief—
If to thy words the fitting deeds be done,
I am thy father, thou shalt be my son.

XII.

The kindest reader would fatigued complain,
Should I recount each question and reply,
Which past between our father and that train
Of barbarous warriors and their sachems high;
But though he languished on my humble strain,
Till patience left, or dullness closed his eye,
Yet to sire Williams 'twas no idle song;—
The dull reality did days prolong.

XIII.

They had their Corbitant's of surly mood,
Who scarce would yield obedience to their lord;
Alike they thirsted for the Yengees' blood,
And Wampanoag's, and alike abhorred.
By gaudy presents he their wrath subdued,
Or won their kindness by his soothing word;
But there was one who spurned all proffers kind—
Whose demon hate was to all goodness blind.

XIV.

It was the grim Pawaw.—He came in ire,
From his proud dwelling by Mooshausick's stream;
He spoke the voice of gods and omens dire,
And loudly chanted his prophetic dream;
"The white man's gods had set the woods on fire,
And Chepian vanished in its fearful gleam;
Their fathers' ghosts came from their hunting ground;
Their children sought, and only ashes found."

XV.

With grave attention did the council hear
That crafty priest his awful omens sing.

The warriors ruled by superstitious fear,
Half credence gave, and overawed the king.
In groups they thronged the forest, far and near,
With gathered brows and speech dark muttering;
Whilst moved the prophet through the kindling crowds,
Like a dire comet through night's lowering clouds.

XVI.

And as he past, the varying rumors flew
Of secret plan's sprung from the Yengees' hate;
And still their fears and doubts and wonder grew,
Whilst on that dream the chiefs prolonged debate;
For priest was he and politician too,
And oft he meddled with affairs of state,
Wrought on the fears of superstition's crew,
And the best counsels of the wise o'erthrew.

XVII.

Thus, when the senate dared resist his sway,
He still gained triumph with the multitude,
Till now the chiefs half yielding to dismay;
Yet vext and goaded by his rebel mood,
Bade that the clans assemble on a day,
And Williams meet the prophet of the wood,
And in their wondering presence overthrow,
His strange dominion, or each hope forego.

XVIII.

I will not say that devils did enlist,
To do the bidding of this grim pawaw;
He might have been a wild ventriloquist,
Formed by rude nature; but the age, which saw
The marvels that he wrought, would aye insist,
His spells surpassed material nature's law;
And that the monarch of the infernal shade
Mustered his legions to the wizard's aid.

XIX.

Great was his fame; for wide the rumor went,
The demons dark were all at his command,

And fiends, in rocks, and dens, and caverns pent,
Came at the beck of his black waving hand;
The boldest keenomps, on such purpose bent,
Could not the terrors of his charms withstand;
Still would they shrink and shudder at the sound,
When spoke his viewless fiends in anger round.

XX.

It too was rumoured that he daily held
Communion strange with monsters of the wood—
Heard their rude voices, and their meanings spelled,
And muttered answers which they understood;
That he had filled with wisdom unexcelled,
A cherished serpent of the sesek's brood—
Had taught his forky tongue to modulate
The voice of man, and speak impending fate.

XXI.

At length the morn of this stern trial rose—
The mustering towns poured forth their eager trains—
From where wild Pawcatuck's dark water flows,
To where Pawtucket cleaves the sounding plains;
From where Aquidney's blooming bosom throws
The ocean back, e'en to the far domains
Of the rude Nipnet, Narraganset's wood
Poured forth in eager throngs the dusky multitude.

XXII.

Swarm upon swarm, far dark'ning all the ground,
The countless clans moved Potowomet's plain,
The dusky rabble filled the borders round,
But near the centre stood the warrior train;
Wild dance their plumes—fierce glance their eyes around,
And hoarse they mutter like the murmuring main;
These accents only o'er the hum prevail,
The priest of Chepian grim!—Awanux weak and pale!

XXIII.

The council formed upon the open glade;
The sachems sate around the mounting blaze;

Five thousand warriors round that senate made
A dreadful ring, and stared with fixed amaze—
Within the senate, (so the chieftains bade,)
Apart sate Williams to their open gaze;
Confronting him, a little space before,
Rose the black wizard in dread garniture.

XXIV.

From crown to heal stained black as night he rose—
All naked save his waist and heaving chest;
The sable fox-hide did his loins inclose—
The sable fox-tail formed his nodding crest,
Bent o'er his locks which hung, and dangling loose,
Half veiled his cheeks, and lengthened to his breast;
Around that breast the same black fox's hair
Moved as he breathed, and seemed as growing there.

XXV.

Tall was his form, and in his dexter hand,
He bore a barb with deadly venom fraught;
Whilst on his left, supported by a band,
He held a casket, where the rabble thought
A manittoo awaiting his command
Coiled in a serpent's folds; and there was nought
That in brave warriors could awake affright,
Save his dire glance and fascinating might.

XXVI.

For, strange to tell! e'en on the human kind,
That serpent ventured with mysterious charm,
And there were those who thought the subtile mind
Of Chepian's self inspired his winding form;
All sought his omens—He was aye inshrined
Through winter's cold 'mong furs to keep him warm;
And ne'er was ushered to the open light,
Till famine roused his rage, and prey provoked his might.

XXVII.

Thus in strange terrors armed the wizard stood,
And on the casket rivetted his eyes,

And whispered for a space in ghastly mood,
Until responses from it seemed to rise
Faintly distinct; at which the vulgar blood
Stayed its career, and e'en the sachems wise
Heard with a thrill—for these dread accents rose;
"Count ye the sands—ye count your pale faced foes."

XXVIII.

The prophet glanced around the throngs to scan;
And well he noted by the silence dread
The moment of effect, and then began,
(Beseeching first his fearful demon's aid;)
"Chepian, thou power of evil! dread of man!
God of destruction! pouring on the head
Of thy opposers, ruins, plagues, and pest,
Let all thy might thy serpent form invest."

XXIX.

He said; then turning to the throngs he spoke;
"Brothers! dark tempests overshade our sky;
The characters upon Cohannet's rock
Set bounds in vain—the stranger doth defy
And break our spells—dread Chepian feels the shock—
In wrath he sees the approaching deity
Of the pale man—and, in his coming stride,
Feels scathe and death to his dominion wide.

XXX.

"Now hearken, brothers—'twas a dismal night;
And in his cave sate Tatoban alone;
The fading embers shed a dreary light,
And the big owl sent forth a hollow moan;
The god of tempests sped his rapid flight,
And 'neath his footsteps did the forest groan;
And whilst he sate, out from the deepest gloom,
Did the dread form of awful Chepian come.

XXXI.

"Like two red comets did his eye-balls blaze,
His form seemed of substantial darkness made;

Naked he stood, yet, hidden from the gaze,
Where round his feet the living shadows played;
His lifted arm a lance of fire displays;
And robed in terrors forward bends his head;
His long black locks shed sparks of living fire,
Stood up self-moved, and curled instinct with ire.

XXXII.

"Sleeps Tatoban! the awful demon said,
Sleeps Tatoban! my Priest, my Prophet sleep!
Does not a pale man my dominion tread?
With hostile gods has he not crossed the deep?
Prophet! the spirits of your kindred dead
Already o'er their children's ashes weep—
Arise! go forth, and by thy serpent quell
The daring stranger, and his gods expel.

XXXIII.

"Hast thou forgot, when by Cohannet's stream,
To curse the strangers every charm was tried?
How, at your mutterings, the pale moon's beam
Retired from Heaven, and backward rushed the tide?
How I appeared, and, by the ember's gleam,
To the hard rock my lance's point applied,
And scored my mandate—saying to the foe,
Thus far thy gods shall come—no further shall they go?

XXXIV.

"Rouse, Prophet, rouse! behold a stranger dare
Pass the charmed limits and our peace invade"—
He said, and, resting on the casket there,
Melted from sight into the sombre shade:
He chose my serpent for his earthly lair;
Swelled his huge volumes, and inspired his head,
And taught his tongue to speak the future well,
And charms most wise that can the bravest quell.

XXXV.

"And durst thou, stranger, brave his glance of fire?
Durst thou confront the terror of his charms?

Confront grim Chepian in the dread attire
Of the great Sesek, whose unearthly arms
Wakes fear in sachems! O, thou fool! retire—
Bear off thy gods; for robed in all their harms
Thou art unsafe.—No power we yield to thee,
Or to thy gods; for Chepian rules by me."

XXXVI.

Williams replied, "Thou Priest of Beelzebub!
Chepian, I mean, if that's his better name—
I come not hither to assume thy robe
Pontifical, or emulate thy fame;
Or yet to trouble, with the warrior's club,
Such saints as thou and thy dark demon claim—
Be thou but peaceful, and thou mayest still
Worship thy manit dark as suits thy stubborn will.

XXXVII.

"But here I sit to prove thee to thy face
A foul impostor, and thy charms a cheat;—
To ope the eyes of a deluded race,
Strangely misled by thy infernal feat;
That in thy foe thy confidence may place,
And him in friendship as a neighbor greet;
So try thy spells, thy utmost powers essay,
And if I blench be thine the victor's day.

XXXVIII.

"Die then!" he said, and down with fury cast
The magic casket, and wide open flew
Its fur-lined cavern.—Forth his volumes vast,
In many a glistening fold, the serpent drew;
Glanced on his burnished scales the sunbeam past
Along his winding spires in many a hue;
Proud of his freedom, o'er the glade he rolled,
And mocked the rain-bow in his hues of gold.

XXXIX.

Now to the sun his glittering breast he rears,
His head high swimming in the wanton gales;

Nor coiled in folds his giant orb appears;
Now stretched recumbent, o'er the plain he trails.
The crowds beheld him, and with mighty cheers,
Hailed their dread demon in his robe of scales.
The monster paused—his eyes on Williams fell,
And shot dire influence, like a light from Hell.

XL.

High towered his head—in many an ample fold,
He coiled his volumes, spire o'er spire ascending;
Still lessening as they rose and inward rolled,
His rustling scales, their thousand colors blending,
Surpassed the hues of diamond and of gold;
Till, from the pyramidal top extending,
Swam forth on crooked neck his eyes of flame,
Rang his sharp buzz, and on he slowly came.

XLI.

Shouted the crowds as they beheld him rise,
"The manittoo! the manittoo!" they cried.
In sooth their demon, from his burning eyes,
Seemed looking forth, and his unlabored glide
Scarce seemed of earthly sort—his glistering dies,
In mingling brilliance changed and multiplied;
The curves that move him scarce their curls untwist;
But o'er them floating, like a globe of mist,

XLII.

His quivering rattles buzz. With curious eyes,
Williams beheld him on his spires advance;
Then grasped a wand—then paused with fixed surprise,
To see the radiance at each motion glance
The hues of Heaven—alternate sink and rise
His bending spires, and still the colors dance—
At every change of that deep thrilling hum
The motions change—the colors go and come.

XLIII.

An odour strange but not offensive spread,
As he advanced and nearer Williams drew;

But penetrating—keen—it filled the head,
Involved his brain, and past his senses through.
Then tranced he sate, and all around him played
Celestial hues, and music strange and new.
The Heavens, the Earth, to various radiance turned,
And mingling rain-bows all around him burned.

XLIV.

The baneful serpent vanished from his sight;
No foreign object did his trance confuse;
So rung the hum—so danced the colors bright,
The hues seemed music, and the music hues;
Still swelled the sounds—still livelier flashed the light;
His limbs obedience to his will refuse;
He strove to rise—he yielded to affright;
For all seemed spell-bound, as in dreams of night.

XLV.

"Whence this dread power that steals my strength away?
This creeping torpor—and this chilling dew?
Whence this strange rapture mingling with dismay?
Ye dangerous beauties! vanish from my view—
Are ye from Hell—and come ye to betray?
One more sad victim seek ye to subdue?
Are ye the Tempter's, whose infernal spell
Bore death to Eden, and gave joy to Hell?

XLVI.

"And shall my labors thus inglorious end?
And shall my fate give Hell a triumph new?"
This thought was fire, and did new vigor lend—
Back rushed his soul through every avenue.
A seeming cloud did from his brain ascend,
The magic colors vanished from his view,
And at his feet, in many an ample sweep,
The odious reptile coiled him for the leap.

XLVII.

Swift darts the tongue—the horrid jaws unfold—
Williams beheld—struck—cleft the head away.

In many an ample coil the body rolled,
And then relaxed, and all extended lay
A headless reptile—all its hues of gold
And diamond vanished with its life's decay.
The Wizard saw his serpent demon slain
And choked and yelled, then choked with rage again.

XLVIII.

The crowds looked on 'twixt terror and surprise,
They gazed—they gaped with fixed astonishment;
Their serpent manit braved—ay slaughtered lies!
Is it Awanux that is prevalent?
But when they gave full credence to their eyes,
A wild and wondering clamor did they vent,
Which closed in shouts that through the forest rolled,
"The Wizard conquered by the Yengee bold!"

XLIX.

Ill could that juggler a white victor brook,
And Hell's dark passions boiled through all his blood;
His eyes shot fire, and from his belt he took
His deadly dart—and in stern silence viewed
Its poisoned barb, whose short and horrid crook
The jaws of seseks armed—jaws all embued
With the keen venom gathered from the fangs
Of such as died by self-inflicted pangs.

L.

Nothing he spake—but, with a hideous yell,
He raised the dart—and backward as he bent
His starting eye-balls shot the light of Hell;
At Williams' breast their vengeful glance was sent;
But, as his muscles did the barb impel,
Red Waban's grasp obstructed their descent—
On earth the weapon falls and pants for blood;
The lifted arm still threatening vengeance stood.

LI.

Miantonomi, who the scene surveyed,
Too long had now his rising wrath concealed,

A mighty lance his better hand displayed,
And well he knew its haft of length to wield;
Backward its hilt the angry sachem swayed,
And 'neath its stroke the staggering wizard reeled;
Then bending low, he through the tumult sped,
And howled and yelled, as through the woods he fled.

LII.

"Go, Priest of Chepian, go!" the sachem said
"Thy dreams are false—thy charms are all a cheat—
Go to thy manit—tell him that his aid
Has failed thee once, and thou art sorely beat
Thy prophecies have us too long betrayed,
And in the council vacant is thy seat.
When aid we need, to him will we apply,
Who conquers thee, and slays thy deity.

LIII.

A space the throngs sate as in deep amaze—
A space 'twere doubtful what might be their mood;
At length wild shoutings they began to raise;—
One transport filled the total multitude;
Their sachem's boldness cheerly did they praise;
For long had they with dread the wizard viewed;
Nor less admired our founder's courage true,
Which did that juggler and his charms subdue.

LIV.

Then rose Canonicus that shrewd old chief;
"Brother!" he said, "much glory hast thou won;—
Thy deeds this day will scantly gain belief,
With warriors red 'twixt rise and set of sun;
Great Chepian's priest, within a moment brief,
Has by thy firmness been quite overdone;
And thou art greater than his manits are,
For they are vanquished in the contest fair.

LV.

Brother! we take thy calumet of peace,
And throw the hatchet into quiet shade,

The Wampanoag's terrors may surcease,
And thou may'st plant on Seekonk's eastern glade;
But hearken, brother!—better far would please
Thy council fire if by Mooshausick made—
But pass we that; for well our brother knows
To live our friend surrounded by our foes.

LVI.

Brother! thou wilt our belt of friendship take,
And for us win the kindness of the White,
That when we war against the Pequot make,
His hands may aid us, and his counsels light;
His thunders speak, and all the forest shake,
His lightnings flash, and spread a wild affright
Through town and fortress—wheresoe'er we go,
Till not a Pequot lives to tell his nation's wo.

LVII.

Brother! we grant thee quiet neighborhood—
The tree of peace o'ershadows thee and me;
Thou mayest hunt in Narraganset's wood,
And catch the fish that in our waters be;
But thou must still promote the red-man's good;
His belt keep bright, and make thy counsels free,
When danger shades us; and if this be done,
I am thy father, thou shalt be my son."

LVIII.

Scarce need I say, sire Williams cheerly gave
The pipe he bore and took the friendly belt;
That thanks he tendered to the sachems brave—
That what he uttered was as deeply felt;
That he repeated each assurance grave
Of friendly favors, whilst he near them dwelt;
Nor pause I, now, the customs to describe,
By which the truce was honored by the tribe.

LIX.

He took the sachem's friendly calumet,
Then scattered wampum 'mong the warriors all;

On M'antonomi's lofty brow he set,
Round waving plumes the jewel coronal;
And well the elder sachem did befit
The scarlet coat, and gave delight withal;
Then ribbons gave he, various their hue,
To counsellors and keenomps, bold and true.

LX.

His mission finished, father Williams sped,
With Waban guiding through the forest lone;
Nor cold nor hunger did he longer dread,
Or bore them cheerly now, his object won;
Quickly to Haup did he the thickets thread—
To Haup where dwelt her chief of old renown—
And found that sachem 'mid his warriors stern,
Alarmed, but hoping still his safe return.

LXI.

Gladly he heard from Waban's faithful tongue,
Sire Williams' speeches and the answers given,
And wildly shouted all that warrior throng,
To learn the dire enchanter's spell was riven;
And wilder shouts the echoing vales prolong,
To hear that priest was from the council driven;
"The tree," they cried, "of peace will bloom again,
The wizard's banished, and his manit slain."

LXII.

Then to the elder chief our Father gave
The Narraganset friendly calumet;
And it was pleasant to behold that grave
And stern old sachem, whilst his eyes were wet
With tears of gratitude—he could outbrave
The stake's grim tortures, and could smiling sit
Amid surrounding foes; yet kindness could
Melt into tears this "stoic of the wood."

LXIII.

He clasped our Father by the hand, and led
In speechless silence to the mountain's crown;

And, from the snow-white clift that capped its head,
They glanced o'er bay and isle, and forest brown.
It seemed a summer's eve in winter bred;
The sun in ruddy gold was going down,
And calm and far the expanded waters lay,
Robed in the glory of the setting ray.

LXIV.

There stretched Aquidnay far tow'rd ocean blue,
In virgin wildness still of isles the queen;
Her branchy forest caught the western hue,
Her vales and banks were decked with cedars green.
Far tow'rd the south, her swelling bosom drew
Its forests lessening in the distant scene;
Till in the vast extent the following view
Lost them in mists breathed from the briny dew.

LXV.

Beneath his feet Aquidnay's north extreme
Embraced a cove begemed with islets gay;
Its silvery bosom glanced the setting beam,
Where the tall hemlocks gave the radiance way.
Young nature there, tranced in her earliest dream,
Did all her whims in vital forms array;
Her feathered tribes round isle and headland glide,
Her scaly broods leap from the glassy tide.

LXVI.

Here from Aquidnay tow'rd the setting sun,
Spread the calm waters like a sea of gold
Begemed with isles, till Narraganset dun
Fringed the far west—there cape and headland bold,
With forests shagged, cast their huge shadows down,
And glassed them in the flood; where silence old
Recalled her reign, save that by times might rise,
On Williams' ears, the sea-bird's jangling cries.

LXVII.

Or he might see borne in the light canoe,
Round jutting point, the lonely fowler glide;

Who paused to watch, with never-ceasing view,
Where the long-diving loon might break the tide;
Or cautious near the feathered myriads drew,
And vext beheld them cleave with clangor wide
Up from the foamy flood, and mounting high,
Darken the day, and seek a distant sky.

LXVIII.

Then glancing north, from far could he behold,
Bright bursting from his source through forests dun,
Like liquid silver broad Cohannet rolled
Tow'rd parent Ocean—there his currents run
Embrowned by fringing woods—here molten gold,
Gleaming and glittering in the setting sun,
They glance by Haup—there, downward as they pour,
They cleave Aquidnay from Pocasset's shore.

LXIX.

That rude Pocasset—which, when Williams saw
From towering Haup, did one broad forest shew;
Here steep o'er steep, there, leaving Nature's law,
Hill, dale and swamp in wild confusion threw
The wildered gaze, where, if the hunter draw
The sounding bow, and but a space pursue
The wounded deer, he finds his guidance fail,
And, lost, halloos through many a winding vale.

LXX.

Yet the rude wigwams smoked from many a glade,
Where by the flood the oaks were branching wide,
Where future gardens might invite the spade,
And the glad swain the fertile glebe divide;
Still onward south the hills retiring made
More ample meadows by the glassy tide;
Till far Sekonnet shewed her strength of rock,
Where the loud ocean's rolling mountains broke.

LXXI.

But on Aquidnay dwelt our Founder's gaze,
With rapture high. "Would Seekonk's mead compare

With yon wild Eden?" Whilst he thus delays,
The old chief's hand does on his bosom bear
As thus he speaks—"Another sachem sways
The isle of peace. All Haup's dominions are
Stretched tow'rd the God of frost—look there and chuse—
All hast thou won, and well a part may use."

LXXII.

Turned by the hand, and voice that wakes his ears,
Beneath his feet one boundless forest lay;
The mossy giants of a thousand years,
O'er hill and plain their mighty arms display;
Mound after mound, far lessening north, appears,
Till in blue haze the branches melt away.
Here Seekonk wedded with Mooshausick beamed,
And there Cohannet liquid silver gleamed.

LXXIII.

Here Kikimuet left his woodland height,
Shined 'twixt the hills, or wandered 'neath the shade;
There Sowams gleamed, if names the Muse aright,
Till far in forest brown its glories fade;
And, here and there, curled on our founder's sight
Smokes from the village of each sheltered glade;
Whilst 'neath his feet, just at the mountain's base,
Rose the chief town of Pokanoket's race.

LXXIV.

Embosomed in thick shades the village stood;
Its frequent voices, up the silent steep,
Came on our founder's ear; in cheerful mood,
The tones of childhood shrill, and manhood deep,
Now told what sports and now what toils pursued
The happy throngs—then would the echoes sweep
Of girlhood's voice, warbling the plaintive strain,
Half chant, half music, to the woodland plain.

LXXV.

Ah! how more lovely than the silence hushed,
That lists in horror for the foeman's tread!

A tender joy our Father's bosom flushed—
His were the toils that had these blessings spread;
The storm, that else had o'er the nation rushed,
Had by his sufferings and his toils been stayed;
And as he mused, his hand the sachem pressed;
For like emotions swelled his rugged breast.

LXXVI.

"And, oh!" he cried, "what can the sachem do?
How can he give to Winiams recompense!
Our foes were many, and our warriors few,
But Winiams came, and he was our defence;
Go, brother, plant; go, plant our forest through,
All hast thou won by thy benevolence;
All hast thou saved from ruthless enemies,
Take what thou wilt and take what best may please."

LXXVII.

Our father answered, "give me bounds and deeds,
No lands I take but such as parchment names;
To future ages will I leave no seeds
To yield a harvest of discordant claims.
If name I must, I name fair Seekonk's meads,
What first I craved still satisfies my aims;
These and the friendship of my neighbors are
Reward too generous for my toil and care."

LXXVIII.

"My brother gives with palm expanded wide,"
The sachem said, "but with a closing hand,
Our gifts are half received and half denied—
Hah! was he born in the white stranger's land?
My brother's corn shall wave by Seekonk's tide—
My brother's town shall on its margin stand—
And on the deer-skin, tested by my bow,
My painted voice shall talk, and to far ages go.

LXXIX.

Whilst thus they spake, the sun declining low,
In Narraganset's shades, half veiled his light;

On rapid pinions did the dark winged crow,
And broad plumed eagle speed their homeward flight;
Warned by the signs, the twain, descending slow,
In converse grave, passed down the wooded height;
And, in the sachem's sylvan palace, share
Respite from hunger, toil and present care.

CANTO SIXTH.

The winds of March o'er Narraganset's bay
Move in their strength—the waves with foam are white,
O'er Seekonk's tide the waving branches play,
The woods roar o'er resounding plain and height;
'Twixt sailing clouds, the sun's inconstant ray
But glances on the scene—then fades from sight;
The frequent showers dash from the passing clouds;
The hills are peeping through their wintry shrouds.

II.

Dissolving snows each downward channel fill,
Each swollen brook a foaming torrent brawls,
Old Seekonk murmurs, and, from every hill,
Answer aloud the coming waterfalls;
Deep-voiced Pawtucket thunders louder still;
To dark Mooshausick joyously he calls,
Who breaks his bondage, and, through forests brown,
Murmurs the hoarse response, and rolls his tribute down.

III.

But hark! that sound, above the cataracts
And hollow winds in this wild solitude
Seems passing strange.—Who, with the laboring axe,
On Seekonk's eastern marge, invades the wood;
Stroke follows stroke—some sturdy hind attacks
Yon ancient groves which from their birth have stood
Unmarred by steel—and startled at the sound,
The wild deer snuffs the gales—then with a bound

IV.

Vaults o'er the thickets, and, down yonder glen,
His antlers vanish—on yon shaggy height
Sits the lone wolf, half peering from his den,
And howls regardless of the morning light—
Unwonted sounds and a strange denizen
Vex his repose—then, cowering with affright
He shrinks away—for with a crackling sound,
Yon lofty hemlock bows, and thunders to the ground.

V.

Who on the prostrate trunk has risen now,
And does with cleaving steel the blows renew?
Broad is the beaver of his manly brow,
His mantle gray, his hosen azure blue;
His feet are dripping with dissolving snow;
His garments sated with the morning dew;
His nerves seem strengthened with the labor past;—
His visage hardened by the winter's blast.

VI.

Though changed by sufferings, 'tis our founder yet;
There does he hope, and labor, but in vain,
On free opinion's base to build a State,
Where reason aye shall spurn the tyrant's chain;
But, ah! unhappy man! the bigot's hate,
Will still, I fear, thy lofty soul restrain:
Will rob thee even of an exile's home,
And leave thee still in savage wilds to roam.

VII.

Hard by yon little fountain, clear and sheen,
Whose swollen streamlet murmurs down the glade,
Where groves of hemlocks and of cedars green,
Stand 'gainst the northern storm a barricade,
Springs the first mansion of his rude demesne,
A slender wigwam by red Waban made:
Such is sire Williams' shelter from the blast,
And there his rest when daily toils are past.

VIII.

Yet seldom from the storm he shrinks away,
With his own hands he's laboring to rear
A mansion, where his wife and children may,
In happier days, partake the social cheer;
Where no sour bigot may in wrath essay
To make the free-born spirit quail with fear,
At threat of scourge, of banishment and death,
For the free thought—the soul's sustaining breath.

IX.

Day after day, does he his toil renew;
The echoing woods still to the axe resound,
The falling cedars do the valley strew,
Or cumber with their trunks the littered ground;
The solid beams and rafters does he hew,
Or labors hard to roll their masses round;
Or squares their sides, or moulds their joints by rule,
To fit their fellows, and sustain the whole.

X.

Long did this task sire Williams' cares engage,
'Twas labor strange to hands like his, I ween,
That had far oftener turned the sacred page,
Than hewed the trunk, or delved the grassy green;
But toils like these gave honors to the sage,
The axe and spade in no one's hands are mean,
And least of all in thine that toiled to clear
The mind's free march—illustrious pioneer!

XI.

Boast of your swords, ye blood-stained conquerors—boast
The free-born millions ye have made your slaves;
Exult o'er fields where liberty was lost,
And patriots fell—where lingering o'er their graves,
A nation's memory, like a vengeful ghost,
Broods never slumbering, and forever raves
Of crimes unanswered—till the gathered wrath
Of ages bursts on your ensanguined path—

XII.

And—where are ye? some remnant left behind,
Some sculptured marble, or decaying fane,
May shew where once ye triumphed mad and blind,
Shew but for genius ye had fought in vain;
Then look to him whose quiet toils unbind
The bonds which bigots gave you to enchain
Man's angel spirit to some demon's will,
And at your guilty deeds, blush and be still.

XIII.

The dawn beheld him as he issued forth—
Beneath his arm his well-edged hatchet borne;
Maugre the fury of the stormy north,
His toils resumed anticipate the morn;
The tempest pours, and, in the whirlwind's wrath,
Full many a branch is from the forest torn;
Yet still his axe resounds—the wearied sun
Goes down to rest and leaves him toiling on.

XIV.

The beams now hewn, he frames the building square—
Each joint adjusting to its counter-part—
Tier above tier with labor does he bear—
Timber on timber closes every part;
Save where the door and lattice breathe the air;
And now the rafters from the wallings start,
And matted o'er is every space between,
And closed against the storm with rushes green.

XV.

His cot now finished, he begins to rear
A paling rude around that verdant glade;
His field and garden soon would flourish there,
And wild marauders might their fruits invade;
His maize might yield a banquet to the bear,
And herds of deer might on his herbage tread;
But little thought he that intruders worse
Than such invaders would his labors curse.

XVI.

Now milder spring begins its April showers,
And up fair Seekonk woos the southern breeze;
The birds are singing in their woodland bowers,
Green grows the glade and budding are the trees;
The purple violet's, and wild strawberry's flowers,
Invite the wandering of the murmuring bees;
And down the glade the twittering swallow slips,
And in the stream her nimble pinions dips.

XVII.

And now our founder, with redoubled haste,
Delves with strong hand to plant the foodful maize;
He turns the glebe, does nature's rankness waste,
The boscage burn, and noxious brambles raze;
Then o'er the seed, on earth's brown bosom placed,
The fertile mould with cautious hand he lays;
Nor this contents—yet for a space he toils
To dress that wild glade with a garden's smiles,

XVIII.

He in the forest carved the deep alcove,
And led the climbing vines from tree to tree;
Still near the cottage rose the birchen grove,
Its tasels waving in the breezes free,
And o'er the stream their boughs the cedars wove,
Where wound a walk adown the murmuring lea;
Luxurious vines the little fount embowers,
And gay beneath it blooms a bank of flowers.

XIX.

The axe ne'er touched the overhanging bough,
Where the blithe robin built her wonted nest;
Still round the borders did the wild rose grow,
For there the brown thrush with her brood might rest;
Nor would he banish from her dwelling low
The long-eared rabbit, but her young carest;
Fed from his hand they gambolled through the grove,
Carest our sire in turn, and practised human love.

XX.

And these long toils had faithful Waban's aid;
His twanging bow announced the early dawn;
Boldly he pushed into the deepest shade,
Or scanned the tracks upon the dewy lawn;
His lusty arms oft grappled on the glade
The growling bear, or caught the bounding fawn,
Or his sure arrow, from the sounding bow,
Brought down the turkey from her lofty bough.

XXI.

Sometimes would he the river's bed explore;
When with sure grasp the slippery eels he caught;
Sometimes he delved along the sandy shore,
And to the lodge the shelly tribute brought;
And ever shared he with his sagamore,
For so to style our founder was he taught,
The fruits of all his toils—'twas aye his care
To parch the maize, and spread the frugal fare.

XXII.

Thus for a space the twain in quietude,
With hopes propitious, urged the task along;
Not but sire Williams oft would inly brood
On the seer's token of a cheering throng,
To mark the spot ordaind for his abode,
Where never tyrant laws should conscience wrong;
This yet was wanting. Haply 'twas a vain,
And wayward fancy of a troubled brain.

XXIII.

But omens dark began to frown at last,
The grim Pawaw had seen his mansion rise—
Had from Mooshausick's heights full often cast
On their advancing toils his watchful eyes;
Williams had hoped, (although the passing blast
Oft smote his ears charged with his warning cries,)
That M'antonomi's spear had quelled his pride—
That with his serpent had his courage died.

XXIV.

But vain these hopes, as vain his labors were;
For the dark priest had not forgot his hate;
A grinding vengeance prompted him to dare
The sure destruction of the rising State;
Or it perchance was salutary care
For Chepian's weal, that could not tolerate
A State where man, with conscience unconfined,
Reasoned—then worshipped as his faith inclined.

XXV.

Scarce had our founder made his close secure,
Ere Seekonk's western marge was blazing bright,
And decked with horns and furs, and paints impure,
The savage prophet danced and howled all night
Around the flame, not failing to adjure
His Manittoo, that most abhorred the light,
To lend him aid, and, or by force or fraud,
Expel the intruder from his new abode.

XXVI.

He had a comrade by the blaze was seen;
And Waban thought that Chepian's self was there,
But then he said, that on Mooshausick's green,
The prophet had his slaves and dwelling fair;
And when he uttered charms with ghastly mien,
And when his hideous yells trilled on the air,
The twain could note his ireful gestures well,
And kindling Waban could their import spell.

XXVII.

War! War! he threatened. And, when morning came,
The flame was quenched; but on the margin he,
All trim for strife, bent his gigantic frame
Over the Seekonk, and toward the lea,
Shook his ensanguined barb, and smote the stream,
And muttered curses numbering three times three;
Then bent his bow, and sent, across the flood,
Darts armed with serpents' fangs, and red with blood.

XXVIII.

And brandishing his blade he jeering said,
That vengeance gave it eyes and appetite,
It soon would eat, but eat in silence dread;
That if the red men were all turning white,
He'd seek the white men that were turning red;
The path was open, and his foot was light;
The Shawmut hunters would with greedy ear,
Hear in what covert couched their stricken deer.

XXIX.

Then with a hideous yell that rent the skies,
He sternly turned, and tow'rd Mooshausick flew;
Waban beheld the scene with kindling eyes,
And answered with a shout of valor true.
Williams might harm from threats like these surmise;
But then he deemed the wily wizard knew
The weight of M'antonomi's angry spear,
And when he listed might be taught to fear.

XXX.

Waban in sooth might many a peril know,
For him the sachem would too coldly feel.
Yet if the wizard could a secret blow,
Near Maqua path in lonely forests, deal,
And feign some vestige of marauding foe,
To shift suspicion, and his guilt conceal,
Williams ne'er doubted that the blood of both,
Would flow alike to quench his boundless wrath.

XXXI.

But scarce from this portentious morn, a sun
Looked on that glade but brought some fresh alarm;
If Waban delved the winding shores upon,
Darts showered around him from some hidden arm;
His snares were plundered ere the morning shown;
Clubs smeared with blood and threatening deadly harm
Lay in his path, and voices strangely broke,
From viewless forms on shrub, or tree, or rock.

XXXII.

Oft came from vacant air the bitter jeer,
In gibberish strange—oft times from under-ground,
The hellish mockery smote the hunter's ear;
Then would he start—but if he glanced around
And Williams saw, he banished every fear;
For well he knew his sachem could confound
Such airy phantoms—he who lately slew,
In Potowomet's glade, that serpent manittoo.

XXXIII.

Then courage taking would he seek the brake,
Cull the straight haft, and arm it with the bone
Or tooth of beaver, and the plumage take
From Neyhom wild to guide it truly on
Its destined course, or with nice caution make
Of sinewy deer the bowstring tough—or hone
His glittering scalping knife, and grimly feel,
How sharp its point—how keen its edge of steel.

XXXIV.

At length, disdainful longer of disguise,
Upon the opposing bank the wizard stood,
With meet compeer—both armed—their battle cries
And challenge bold fired martial Waban's blood;
Scorning all counsel, to the marge he flies,
And showers his arrows o'er the severing flood;
To taunts and jeers his bow alone replies,
And hostile darts begin to span the skies.

XXXV.

From tree to tree, the furious champions flew,
Driving or driven from the sheltering screen,
Each change, each movement, yielding to the view
Their swarthy members through the foliage green;
Then would their bows the hostile showers renew,
And hideous yells fill every pause between;
Now down the stream—now at the tumbling falls,
The petty battle raves, and wrath to vengeance calls.

XXXVI.

Hour after hour, thus raged the doubtful fight;
Until the combatants their arrows spent;
Then to the river's marge, in peaceful plight,
Bearing the pipe with fumes all redolent,
The fraudful wizard came, as to invite
Across the stream to cheer quite innocent,
And friendly league, a neighbor and a friend;
"Come let the pipe," he said, "the battle end.

XXXVII.

"Waban is brave, and Tatoban is brave,
Hereafter may we live as neighbors kind,
So let thy arrows sleep—no more shall rave
This knife and hatchet—Tatoban was blind!"
"Go!" Waban cried, "thou and thy dastard slave,
Go trap the Neyhom, or the foolish hind,
But thinkest thou into thy open snare
To lure the cunning fox and slay him there?

XXXVIII.

Thus closed that day the strife—another came,
And all was peace—another sun, and still
Another sun, rose and still brought the same
Unbroken peace—no threatening sign of ill,
Quite undisturbed red Waban trapped his game—
Or delved the shore—no foe appeared—until
Williams beguiled deemed he might safely bless
His weary hours, with all earth's happiness.

XXXIX.

Waban his only counsellor and friend,
Warrior and subject in this lone domain,
Did now the summons of his chief attend,
And to each question gave the answer plain.
"Waban!" said Williams, "do our battles end?
Is the war over—have we peace again?
No more the prophet on yon margin stands—
No more he wings his darts, or whirls his blazing brands."

XL.

Waban replied, " did ever noon-day light
On mid-night darkness break?—or tempest shed,
Just as it gathered, radiance mild and bright?—
Heard not my sachem what the prophet said?
That if the red men were all turning white,
He'd seek such white men as were turning red.
Perchance he goes—and Waban has a fear,
That to his cunning speech they'll lend a listening ear."

XLI.

Waban! fear not, my pale-faced brethren are
All christians, or at least would so be thought;
And think'st thou Beelzebub, however fair
His speech may be, could move their feelings aught
Against their brother. It is better far,
If the grim savage hath such vengeance sought,
Than lurking be among the bushes here,
To fill our days with care—our nights with fear.

XLII.

" But, Waban, I have now a task for thee—
Think not of him, be thy attention here—
Whilst the snows covered earth, and ice the sea,
I left my consort and my children dear;
'Twas stormy night—the hunter sheltered me;
And in his lodge he gave abundant cheer;
Then to the rising sun he cheerly sped,
And saw 'mong faces pale the wanderer's shed.

XLIII.

" There too he saw his little children play,
And the white hand which gave the blanket red,
But now far distant seems that gloomy day,
When from their presence thy white sachem fled;
The lodge is built—the garden smiling gay—
Will the swift foot once more the forest thread,
And guide the children and the snow-white hand,
Along the howling wilds to this far distant land?"

XLIV.

Waban replied, the nimble foot will go—
But a gaunt wolf may haunt the hunter's way,
And he will sharp his darts, and string his bow,
And gird his loins as for the battle fray;
The Priest of Chepian ne'er forgets a foe—
His vengeance lasts until a bloody day
Shall feed the crows, or still a bloodier night
Give the gaunt wolf a banquet ere 'tis light.

XLV.

"God is our trust!" our pious founder said
"Arm, and go forth confiding in his might—
Far as a banished exile's foot dare tread,
On ground forbidden, will thy sachem white
Journey to meet thee. When the sun has shed
Five times from orient skies his flaming light,
Williams will meet his spouse and children dear,
Hid in brown shades forbidden Salem near.

XLVI.

Our founder then the brief epistle traced;
Intreating first that some kind Salem friend,
To aid his little Israel through the waste,
Would for a space two well trained palfreys lend;
Then to his spouse with kind expression graced,
Did meet directions for her guidance send;
Called her from Egypt—bade her cheerly dare
The desert pass, and find her Canaan there.

XLVII.

The next morn dawned, and Waban stood prepared—
His knife well sharpened and his bow well strung—
He waited only till his chief declared
His purpose full—then on his mantle flung—
Girded his loins—his brawny arms embared—
Then with a plunge through rattling thickets sprung—
And soon the thunderings of the partridge tell,
Where bounds his distant foot from dell to dell.

XLVIII.

Ne'er from himself had father Williams hid,
That his own strength had on that journey tired,
But his hard lot all tenderness forbid,
And hearts scarce feminine in all required;
But whilst he mused new apprehensions chid
Each softer thought, and dire alarms inspired;
Still Waban's words would on his mind intrude;
"That Prophet's wrath was quenched alone by blood."[a]

CANTO SEVENTH.

Much Williams dreaded that dark priest, I ween,
Albeit he hid his fears from Waban's eyes;
His threat'ning arrows and his savage mien
Would often now in mid-night dreams arise;
And, rising, spread of blood a woful scene;—
His Mary pale—his children's wailing cries—
Then would he start, and marvel how a dream,
Delirium's thought, should so substantial seem.

II.

If in the lonely wilds, by evening dim,
That vengeful savage should the path waylay,
Of all the riches earth contained for him,
Those jewels of the heart, what power could stay
His thirst of blood—his fury wild and grim
As is the tiger's, bounding on his prey—
Oft came obtruding this annoying thought—
He shook it off—still it returned unsought.

III.

Not long he brooks this torturing delay,
But soon tow'rd Salem through lone forest goes;
Nor will the Muse now linger on his way,
And sing in horrid shades each night's repose,
Until she shuddering mingle with her lay,
And seem herself to bear her hero's woes;
Let it suffice, that he in forests brown,
Upon the third day's dawn, saw that forbidden town.

IV.

He saw the cottage he must tread no more;
And sighed that man should be so stern to man;
Two harnessed palfreys stood beside the door,
And, by the windows busy movement ran;
Then did his eyes the village downs explore;
The hardy throngs not yet their toils began—
All there was sleep, save where the watch-dog bayed,
Or lowed the grazing herds along the dewy glade.

V.

And many a field new traces of the plough,
And many a roof its recent structure showed,
And, in the harbor, many a sable prow,
On the dark billows, at its anchor rode;
And, ah! he saw (to him no temple now,)
That roof where erst in solemn prayer he bowed,
And strove to lead his little flock to Heaven—
That flock now torn with strife, their shepherd from them riven.

VI.

Again his eyes turned to that dearer spot;
The palfreys laden with their burdens stood;
Such furniture they bore as Mary thought
The tender exiles now to thread the wood
Could ill dispense withal—nor was forgot
Aught that might comfort most their far abode,
And homely garnitures of household were
A cumberous burden for a journey far.

VII.

At length red Waban took each palfrey's rein,
And slowly strode the burden's beasts before;
Then saw he Mary, with her little train
Of blooming children, issue from the door;
Some loving neighbors seemed them to detain,
A space of Heaven a blessing to implore,
Then broke the farewell hymn, a pensive strain,
From mingled voices, as they trod the plain.

VIII.

And it was pleasant, and was mournful too,
To see the matron, leading by the hand,
From all their joys to toils and dangers new
In the drear wilderness, that infant band;
Hand clasped in hand did they their way pursue,
All blithe and innocent, to that far land—
Full as unconscious of the ills that wait,
As that their labors were to found a State.

IX.

But father Williams' patriarchal eyes
Saw in that infant group a people's germ;
The nursery of ages, whence should rise,
Religious freedom! thy defenders firm;
And felt that God, o'er their young destinies,
With smiles benign would stretch a sheltering arm;
Yet when he thought what trials they must know,
The father's bosom hove, and tears began to flow.

X.

Now Waban passed him where concealed he stood,
And slowly led the burdened beasts along,
And then his Mary glided 'neath the wood,
Still guiding by the hand the prattling throng;
No more in secret he the angels viewed,
But in a rapture from the thicket sprung—
"O Father! Father!" the loved infants cried,
And Mary clasped his hand, and glancing heaven-ward sighed.

XI.

Spare! spare my numbers! for to whom belongs
To sing of wo-attempered joy like this?
Or if to any, what but angel tongues,
Could fitly speak a glance of Heaven's own bliss,
Shed on pure hearts still struggling with the wrongs
Of persecution—lighting the abyss
Of sufferings else uncheered—'twas like the ray

Which paints the bow upon the tempest spray.

XII.

Short is the transport—soon must they resume
The weary march, and from the dawning gray,
Hour after hour, to pensive evening's gloom,
Through the lone forest urge their devious way.
O'er river, vale and steep, through brake and broom,
And rough ravine, their tender feet did stray;
The father's arms oft bore the lovely weight,
Or on the palfrey's back the weariest wanderer sate.

XIII.

And thus they past o'er many a rapid flow,
Climb'd many a hill—through many a valley wound,
Whilst wary Waban moved before them slow,
And for their path the smoothest passage found;
The river deep—the miry fen and low,
The floods had swollen to their utmost bound;
Unbridged by frost, no passage now they show,
And by a devious route the anxious wanderers go.

XIV.

The sun from middle skies his course now bent,
And they a space paused on a rising ground;
And, as they respite took, their glance they sent
O'er the vast sea of forest that embrowned
Hill, dale and plain; the vaulted firmament—
And that brown waste clipt by the azure round,
And yon bright sun—yon eagle soaring high—
And yon far wigwam's smoke, are all that cheer their eye.

XV.

At times the eagle's scream trilled from on high—
At times the pecker tapped the mouldering bough—
Or the far raven woke her boding cry—
All else was hushed the boundless prospect through;
And, ah! they felt in this immensity,
Whilst thus they scanned it from that lofty brow,
As feels in ocean's mid some ship-wrecked crew,
Wandering the shoreless vast borne in the frail canoe.

XVI.

Here sate the little group our founder nigh,
There stretched the waste they were to journey through,
Embosomed in its drear immensity,
The land of hope, far, far beyond their view—
That dusky man, whose quickly glancing eye
Might doubt and peril to their course foreshew,
Their only pilot through the dark profound;
Their only earthly aid when death and danger frowned.

XVII.

And something was there, in that red man's mien,
Which through the morn had drawn our founder's view;
For he moved speechless, and was often seen
To bend his ear, or start at object new;
And now he stood behind the thicket's screen,
And o'er the vast a searching glance he threw,
There paused—nor started till a distant howl
Did, with long echoes through the forest roll.

XVIII.

It seemed a wolf's—but Waban's practised ear
Could well the language of the forest spell—
Again he paused—until from distance drear,
A faint response in dying cadence fell:
Then came in haste—"Does not my sachem hear
The voice of vengeance in the breezes swell?
Come! Let us hasten to some friendly town,
For murder tracks us through the forest brown!

XIX.

Comrade to comrade calls!—The demon's priest
Is on our trail!"—No more the red man spoke,
And this in Narraganset's tongue addrest,
Nought to the matron told—save that the look
And earnest gesture might inspire her breast
With apprehensions vague—she soon mistook
These for the savage in his wonted mood,
And seemed confirmed as she our founder viewed;

XX.

Who in like speech thus to his faithful guide,
"Waban be calm! Wake not in bosoms frail
A groundless fear—the tokens may have lied—
Some other wolf may be upon our trail."
"Waban was hunted," quickly he replied,
"Far tow'rd the white man's town through yonder vale,
When there that priest oft in his pathway stept,
And watched the wigwam where the white hand slept."

XXI.

Sire Williams shuddered thus to realize
What he had hoped was but his fancy's fear,
But quelled he yet each symptom of surprise,
And thus to Waban; "Brother be your ear
Quick as the beaver's, and your searching eyes
Like to the eagle's, and, the foeman near,
Be your heart bolder than the panther's when
He slays the growling bear, and drags him to his den.

XXII.

They left the steep, and, o'er the woodland plain,
Past with all speed the tender group could make;
They ford the rivers, and their course maintain
Through ancient groves, where, bare of broom and brake,
The lurking foe might scant concealment gain;
Waban still moved before, and nothing spake;
His rapid glance scanned every thicket near,
And when he paused he bent the listening ear.

XXIII.

Hour after hour, thus did the hunter go,
His eyes still roving and his ears still spread;
His was a spectre's glide—but toiling, slow,
The lagging group pursued with faultering tread.
At last he paused beneath a birchen bough,
Where alders dense seemed a safe barricade,

Waiting the group's advance.—With anxious breast
Williams approached and thus his guide addresst:

XXIV.

"Sees not my brother that the shadows grow
Fast tow'rd the east, and that the forest brown
Soon hides the sun? then whither does he go
To rest in safety till the morning shone?"
Waban replied, "o'er yon far distant brow,
Smokes in the vale Neponset's peopled town;
Thy red friends there will thee in safety keep,
There may the white hand and the children sleep."

XXV.

As thus he spake, across their pathway sped
The startled partridge on the whiring wings;
An arrow glanced—it grazed the hunter's head,
And the shrill forest with the bowstring rings,
Flashed Waban's eyes, and all the warrior red
Flames through his blood, and every muscle strings;
He stooped to mark where twanged that hostile bow—
Then sprang from tree to tree, to reach the assailing foe.

XXVI.

But ere he gained the destined point, or viewed
The fell assassin, the dry fagots' crash,
The waving coppice, and re-echoing wood,
And sounding foot-falls, down the lawns that dash,
Told him how vainly he his foe pursued,
Or that pursuit were dangerously rash;
Then turning slowly, he retraced his track,
As his foiled leap the lion measures back.

XXVII.

The matron, trembling, viewed the passing scene;
For she had marked that hostile arrow's flight,
And Williams' glance, and Waban's ireful mien,
Told her what dangers did their fears excite;
No frantic shrieks the mother's acts demean;
A mother's cares did every thought invite;

And, o'er the little fountains of our blood,
She stretched her arms' frail shield, and trembling stood.

XXVIII.

Though with more calmness, yet with equal dread,
The anxious father viewed the threatening harm;
And, under God, what was there now to aid
Save his own firmness and red Waban's arm?
Behind—before—a dreary forest spread—
Far off Neponset—here the dire alarm
Of lurking savage—whilst the gathering night
Still added horror to a doubtful flight.

XXIX.

He paused one moment, and his means forlorn
To guard his onward march he thus arrayed:
The palfreys shielded by the burdens borne,
Each side the moving group, were slowly led;
This reined by him, that by his eldest born,
Whilst nimble Waban scoured the threatening shade—
On every side the watchful hunter ran;
Now fenced their flanks—now pioneered their van.

XXX.

As when the eagle, from her airy rest,
Watching her callow young with anxious eye,
Sees the dark thickets moved, by footsteps prest,
Close in the precincts of her nursery high,
With outstretched pinions round her fostered nest,
She wildly wheels—then darts into the sky—
Then sweeps o'er tickets—gathering every sound,
She soars through fields of air, or sails along the ground.

XXXI.

So Waban watched and ran—whilst moving slow,
The anxious father aids the group along;
A dreadful silence reigns the forest through—
Hushed is the prattling of each infant's tongue—
No sound is there, save that of footsteps low,
Or of the breeze that sighs the leaves among,

Or palfrey's tramp—whose hoofs, with iron shod,
Now clink on rocks, now deaden on the sod.

XXXII.

The sun at last sunk in the western shade,
And the thick forest cast a darker frown,
And now they paused, amid an open glade,
More than a bow-shot from the thickets brown;
Then father Williams to the hunter said,
"Where! where! O Waban, is Neponset's town?"
And Waban answered, "Full one half a sleep
This lagging march requires to bring us to its steep."

XXXIII.

"Then here we rest to take whate'er may come,"
Our founder said, "and do you all prepare
To tread those realms which lie beyond the tomb—
There are no foes or persecutors there,
To drive the guiltless forth, and bid them roam
In savage wilds—yet do not quite despair;
When comes the foe, and come he doubtless will,
Brother! we must be firm—if needful we must kill!"

XXXIV.

"Waban is firm," the hunter said, and smote
His naked breast, and raised his stature high—
"Yet hear the red man still—not far remote
Is Waban's rock, where he is wont to lie,
When the far-striding moose has tired pursuit,
And night comes down, and tempests rule the sky—
There may we rest; the foe's approach is hard
But by one pass, and that will Waban guard,"

XXXV.

This place they sought, through a deep rocky dell,
Where scarce the palfreys found a footing sure—
Where deeper darkness from the forest fell,
And thicker boscage did the pass immure—
At last before them, like a citadel,
Rose a tall rock.—Its frowning frontals lower

O'er a green lawn, whose sides, with brambles dense,
Stretched to the rock's steep base impenetrable fence.

XXXVI.

"Here," said the red man (as he raised a mass
Of vines that clustered down the rock's descent)
"Here's Waban's cavern—here is ample space
For thee and thine—in this rude tenement,
Ten hunters oft have found their biding place;
Nor by its limits were too closely pent;
Waban will now far down the opening raise,
In yon dry fagot's heap the mounting blaze."

XXXVII.

"Stay! stay!" said Williams, "wouldst thou lure the foe?
Wouldst wake the flame to tell him where we sleep?"
The hunter smiled, "My sachem does not know
How true the foe will to our footsteps keep;
He hears, perchance e'en now, our accents low—
Or marks us from some tree on yonder steep—
Waban will wake the fire—'twill serve to show
His posture, numbers, and will aid our blow.

XXXVIII.

Williams assented, and whilst Waban fired
The arid fagots, he the burdens took
From off the palfreys, that o'erwrought and tired
Now stretched their toil-worn members forth and shook
Their liberated frame—the ample breath respired,
And quiet graze the lawn.—Then to the rock
The father hastened with a blazing brand—
His spouse and children linking hand in hand,

XXXIX.

Pursued his steps.—It was a cavern rude,
Its floor a level rock—its vaulted roof
Of granite masses formed—whose arches stood
More firmly for the weight they propt aloof—
And here and there upon the floor were strewed
Extinguished brands—these and like signs gave proof

Men there had dwelt—then, through the screening vines
Sire Williams glances out and marks where shines,

XL.

Full upon Waban's face, the mounting blaze—
Though half a bow-shot from the cavern, he
Stands at the fire, yet its bright gleam displays
His hue and shape, and then could Williams see
How well the hunter judged thus far to raise
The burning pyre—no passage could there be
For hostile foot, save by that glittering flame,
Which well would light the arrow's certain aim.

XLI.

Such furniture, as for their strongest need,
The wretched exiles had themselves supplied,
Was now brought to the cave, with bread to feed
The little children clustering at the side
Of their fond parents.—Then did thanks succeed
To God who deigned such comforts to provide,
And earnest prayers that His protecting might
Would shield them through the dangers of the night.

XLII.

With trembling haste a slight repast they took,
Then to their several places they repaired,
The mother sate deep in the rocky nook
Beside her children, and their pallet shared;
Red Waban sate upon a jutting rock,
Hard by the cavern's mouth, the pass to guard;
Whilst at its entrance Williams listening stood,
Screened by the vines, and every passage viewed.

XLIII.

Deep night came down o'er forest, vale and hill—
The dismal hootings of the darkling owl—
The melancholy notes of Whip-poor-will
And the far distant lone wolf's long-drawn howl,
Answered at times by panther screaming shrill,
Such hideous echoes through the forest roll,

That Mary shudders, and, from transient sleep,
The infants starting up, for terror weep.

XLIV.

But Williams listened with accustomed ear,
The dread of man alone disturbed his breast,
Hour after hour, unmarked by danger near,
He watched the passage for the savage priest,
With eyes toward the flame still does he hear,
Whatever steps the rustling leaves molest;
And oft he thought o'er thickets brown he saw
Wave the black fox-tail of the grim Pawaw.

XLV.

At last within the hollow forest rose
Sounds that seemed quite unmeaning to his ear,
'Twas as if human hands were breaking boughs
All green with verdure of the new-born year;
Crash follows crash.—"Are these approaching foes?
Do one or more their march thus pioneer?"
Nought answered Waban, but he seemed to shrink
More closely 'mong the vines that clad the rock's dark brink.

XLVI.

A moment past, when bounding o'er the hedge,
A monster trotted tow'rd the mounting flame;
Then turned and bayed—'twere doubtful to allege
Dog, fox, or wolf, his aspect best became;
Still did he howl, with still increasing rage;
And Waban rose, and gave his arrow aim,
But ere its flight, a whistled signal rang,
The monster turned, and to the forest sprang.

XLVII.

"The fell Pawaw! his dog!" red Waban cried,
In tone supprest, and hid himself again;
And Williams feared he had too much relied
Upon the courage of that dusky man;
He took the hatchet from the hunter's side,

And dropt the feebler bludgeon from his span;
'Thy sachem," said he, "will himself essay
To aid his warrior in the approaching fray."

XLVIII.

"'Tis good!" said Waban, "so red sachems do—
But there! behold! behold! They come! They come!"
And Williams glanced, and, peering thickets through,
Half in the light—half in the changeful gloom—
The forest boughs seemed moving out to view,
Branch heaped on branch, a weight most cumbersome
For human feet, yet human feet, he knew,
That burden bore, and with it dangers new.

XLIX.

Straight to the blaze they moved, and, dashing down
The branches green upon the mounting flame,
Put out the light, and smoke and shadow brown,
In one dense rolling night, the glade o'ercame;
The mother shrieked—the father with a groan,
All horror-stricken, trembled through his frame;
For each now felt that, with that glancing ray
The last faint trembling hope had died away.

L.

A fearful growl, close to the cavern's rent,
First broke the thrall of horror and surprise;
And, by the gleam the smouldering embers sent,
That canine monster shooting from his eyes
A baleful glance, crouched seemingly intent,
On the scared infants as his famine's prize;
The father drove the hatchet to his brains;
One horrid yell he gave, and writhed in dying pains.

LI.

Seeking the cavern's mouth along the rock,
Some groping hand the vine's thick foliage stirred—
"Where art thou Waban!" and the war-whoop broke—
Palsied with fear the trembling mother heard—
"Where art thou Waban!" and, with horrid look,

A giant savage through the foliage stared;
But, at that moment, from his rocky mound,
Red Waban's bow twanged with its sharpest sound.

LII.

Back reeled the savage with a dismal howl,
And on the earth like stricken bullock fell;
But still new terrors filled the father's soul;
He heard another, and more fearful yell;
Across the glade a new assailant stole,
The blaze reviving showed his movements well;
And Williams sprang his warrior to sustain,
Just as he strained the yielding bow again.

LIII.

But as he drew the arrow to the head
The cord snapt short—he dashed the weapon down,
And leaping from the rock upon the glade,
With glittering scalping knife and haughty frown
Before the assailant stood—who paused—surveyed—
Measuring the hunter's height from heel to crown,
Then, swift as thought, the vengeful hatchet sent—
At Waban's head the well-aimed weapon went.

LIV.

But well the wary hunter knew his foe;
He'd scanned his purpose in his glancing eye,
He marked the coming steel, and, bending low—
The whirling hatchet cleft the air on high;
The clift behind rings with the shivering blow,
And o'er the glade its scattered atoms fly,
Then with wild yells they wave the scalping knife,
Together rush, and thrust and strike for life.

LV.

Oh 'twas a fearful scene—a moment dire,
For on the issue of that contest lay
The lives of infants, mother and of sire,
And the fair fame which crowns a distant day;
Soon closed the champions by the glimmering fire,

Limbs locked in limbs in terrible affray—
They writhe—they wrench—they stagger to and fro—
Hands grasping hands that aim the fatal blow.

LVI.

Now struggling by the flames they past from sight;
For Williams lingered yet to guard the cave,
And there, enveloped in a deeper night,
Still with more fury did the contest rave—
The blow—the wrench—the pantings of the fight—
The crash of fagots and of thickets gave
A dreadful notice of each effort made,
Where life for life strove in that shuddering shade.

LVII.

Now darting high above the deeper glooms,
Hands clinched in hands, their naked arms they strain;
Now tost o'er thickets brown, heads, crests and plumes
Confusedly shake—stoop—rise—and stoop again—
At every effort each fierce champion dooms
His foeman's blood to redden all the plain;
And as they storm and tempest o'er the glade,
Earth thunders under their resounding tread.

LVIII.

Beside the father sunk the mother pale,
Infantile sympathy her fears partook;
At times the children raised the fearful wail—
At times all breathless with grim terror shook—
Now Williams glanced along the kindling vale;
No signs of other foe his fears awoke;
Then, with a word that quick return presaged,
He rushed tow'rd where the doubtful contest raged.

LIX.

As he advanced the tumult seemed to swell,
And rapidly approach its awful close;
On every side the crashing thickets fell,
As here and there still strove the panting foes;
From flaming breasts oft burst the maddening yell,

And thick and fast resounded blows on blows;
Still undistinguished struggle they in night—
Earth shakes—the thickets rend—and wilder storms the fight.

LX.

He past the flame and paused—for on his ear,
There came with louder crash a heavy sound—
He listens still—and silence—sudden—drear—
Reigns o'er the glade, and through the glooms profound.
Who is the victim? and ill-boding fear
Tells him that Waban gasps upon the ground;
One bubbling groan, as if the life-blood gushed—
A shuddering struggle then—and all was hushed.

LXI.

In dire suspense the anxious father stood,
Yet did he still unmanly terrors quell;
His hand, yet guiltless of a mortal's blood,
Now grasped the axe to meet the victor fell;
When, 'neath the arches of the dreary wood,
Trilled the far-trembling, death-announcing yell—
So like a demon's, issuing from his pit;
Who but that savage could the sound emit?

LXII.

Then slowly issuing from the gloomy wood—
Doubtful and darkling for the ghostly shade—
A form approached, and as it onward trod,
It came distinct along the open glade;
And it was Waban, bathed in hostile blood,
And by the lock he held a trunkless head.
He stooped beside the mounting blaze to shew,
Still more distinct, the trophy to his view.

LXIII.

With lips still quivering, and with eyes unglazed,
The reeking fragment seemed as living still,
Fierce on the horrid thing the victor gazed;
The battle's wrath still did his bosom fill;

His eyes looked fire—another yell he raised;
Rebellowing forests shrieked from hill to hill—
Then, by the long dark lock swung from the ground,
He whirled on high the ghastly ball around.

LXIV.

Around—around—still gathering force it went—
Still on his sinews strained the whirling head—
Till cleaving from the scull the scalp was rent,
And through the air the ponderous body sped;
Deep in the hollow woods its force was spent—
Thrice bounding from the ground—then falling dead—
He turned and spoke—"No more the babes shall weep!
The grim Pawaw now sleeps! and Waban now can sleep."

LXV.

They passed the turf, as they the cavern sought,
Where fell the body of his earliest slain,
And Waban said, as paused he o'er the spot,
"The black Priest's comrade never wakes again;"
Then did he seize the body by the foot,
And dragged the bleeding corpse along the plain,
And o'er the rocky steep the burden dashed;
It dropped in night—re-echoing thickets crashed.

LXVI.

Then the rude victor washed the stains away,
Cast him on earth, and soon deep slumber shewed
How lightly in his rugged bosom lay
The horrid memory of that scene of blood;
But Williams watched until the dawning gray,
And Mary's fitful sleep the scenes renewed,
Whilst the young dreamers, in her circling arms,
Oft shrieked and sobbed in slumber's vain alarms.

LXVII.

The morning dawns, and they their march resume,
No perils now annoy their toilsome way;
The night came down and with its sober glooms,
Brought quiet sleep until the morning's ray;

Again they rose, and gained their joyous home
On Seekonk's marge, just at the close of day;
And him they blessed, who had in safety led
Them through dire perils, to their humble shed.

CANTO EIGHTH.

Through Seekonk's groves the morning sun once more
Flames in his glory. Waving verdant gold
The boundless forest stands. Wild songsters pour,
From every dewy glade and tufted wold,
The melody of joy. From shore to shore,
The tranquil waters dream, and soul-like hold
An imaged world within, of softest hue,
And its far downward bending vault of blue.

II.

And Williams issued from his humble cot,
Not as of late in solitary mood,
With cheerless heart and ill-foreboding thought,
But with light step, and breast of quietude,
Attended by the partner of his lot,
And their young Hopes; who with blithe interlude,
Of prattling speech, softened the graver talk
Of their fond parents in the morning's walk.

III.

In sooth the buoyance of his spirits spread
O'er all his labors their own cheerful flush;
Ne'er was the grass so verdant on the glade,
Ne'er did the fountains sparkle with such gush;
Ne'er had the stream such lovely music made,
Ne'er sung so blithe the robin on the bush,
The woodland flowers far brighter hues displayed,
More sunny smiled the lawn, and deeper frowned the shade.

IV.

They walked and talked—he told his trials o'er ;
And oft his Mary brushed aside the tear,
And oft they joined to thank kind Heaven once more,
That thus his sufferings were rewarded here ;
Then would they sit beneath the fountain's bower,
And woo the breeze, or smiling bend the ear
To infant mirth, which, in its silver tone,
Soothed those rude wilds with music erst unknown.

V.

All, all was happy—was security
In blest seclusion.—The rude storm seemed past,
The bow of promise arched life's future sky,
No threatening cloud their journey overcast—
Bliss was around them—Heaven with gracious eye
Looked down with smiles and blest their toils at last.
Their Salem friends will soon the journey try—
They are not here is all that wakes a sigh.

VI.

Thus for a space did they anticipate
The bliss which Heaven for pilgrims has in store,
When their freed souls shall view their former state,
And their past pains enhance their joys the more ;
But yet one fear of darkly frowning fate,
Our founder's bosom slightly brooded o'er :
No Indian throng, as spake that wonderous seer,
Them yet had welcomed with Whatcheer ! Whatcheer !

VII.

But this were idle—'twas perchance a dream ;
His thoughts seemed wandering, or disturbed at best,
When stood, or seemed to stand in doubtful gleam,
That form scarce earthly and his ears addressed ;
So let it pass—for it would ill beseem
One staid and grave to be at all unblest,
Whilst Heaven is showering mercies on his head,
For visionary fears and superstitious dread.

VIII.

"Waban," he said, "a generous feast prepare—
We can be cheerful without being mad—
The good man's smiles may be a godly prayer;
The wicked only should be very sad.
Mary, God feeds the tenants of the air;
Mark how they thank Him with their voices glad;
The heart of man should nearer kindred own,
Joy in his smiles, and sorrow in his frown."

IX.

Then forth paced Waban to the winding shore,
And laid the tribute of its bosom bare;
Nor failed he next the dingles to explore,
And trap the partridge or the nimble hare;
Soon 'neath a beech, hard by the cottage door,
On marshalled stones the fagots blazing are;
And when with hissing heat the furnace glows,
Waban the tribute gives, and shuts the vapors close.

X.

The whilst our Founder passed from place to place,
And did each plan of village grandeur name;
This rising mound the future church should grace,
Yon little dell the village school should claim;
That sloping lawn the council hall should base,
Where freemen's voices should the laws proclaim,
And ne'er to bigot yield the civil rod,
But save the Church by leaving her to God.

XI.

Thus past their hours—at last, from middle skies,
The sun began his course of glory down;
From Waban's ready feast the vapours rise;
The group is seated 'neath the beech's frown—
"Thou kind and generous man," our Founder cries,
"Our brave defender! thy complexion brown
Bars not thy presence—sit thou at the board,
God made thy kind of these broad lands the lord.

XII.

"My valiant warrior like a Keenomp fought,
And Chepian's priest before his valour fell;
But his white sachem in the battle wrought,
Too little for a chief he loves so well."
"The dog—the dog! that had the children caught,"
Exclaimed the red man, "does his valour tell,
A manit-dog was he; for well he knew
Whate'er the priest of Chepian bade him do.

XIII.

The priest of Chepian and his comrade came
To fight the white man and his warrior brave;
The fox-eared demon sought for other game,
And went to filch it from the rocky cave;
My sachem while a manittoo o'ercame,
To demon dark a fatal wound he gave;
Brave is my sachem! for he nobly slew
What Waban dreaded most—that fearful manittoo!"

XIV.

"Brother," said Williams, under Power Divine,
That shields the just man in dark peril's hour,
Thine was the victory—and the glory thine,
To quell Apollyon's priest—a demon's power!—
Henceforth the demon must his lands resign,
And thou must be Mooshausick's sagamore,
The right of conquest will do very well,
When Hell assails us, and we conquer Hell.

XV.

"But might the choice of either blameless go,
Mary! these fruits of sufferings and of toils,
And racking cares through fourteen weeks of wo,
I'd prize far higher than the reeking spoils
Of all the nations laid by Cæsar low,
When he victorious o'er Rome's civil broils,
Sate, like the Jove he worshiped, o'er a world,
Whose crowns were offered, and whose incense curled.

XVI.

" And there is cause I trow.—Who cannot see
That a dark cloud o'er our New-England lowers?
The tender conscience struggles to be free—
The tyrant struggles, and retains his powers—
Oh whither shall the hapless victims flee—
Where be their shelter when the tempest roars?
May it be here—may it be Heaven's decree,
To make its builder of a worm like me."

XVII.

Whilst thus he spake the neighboring thickets shook,
And issued from them one of mien austere;
And Williams knew a Plymouth elder's look,
In doctrines stern—in practice most severe;
His gait was slow, his brows could scantly brook
Such signs of comfort and of earthly cheer;
And up he came, scarce could they reason why,
Like a dark cloud along a cheerful sky.

XVIII.

The glooms, that gathered o'er our father's breast,
With heavy efforts strove he to dispel;
" Elder!" he said, " thou art an honored guest;
To see our ancient friends should please us well—
Thy journey long must give the banquet zest,
Come take thou freely of our sylvan meal,
And speak the whilst what tidings thou may'st bear,
From Plymouth's rulers and our brethren there."

XIX.

" Williams!" he said, " I need no food of thine—
I ne'er thread wilds without a store my own;
But 'neath that roof, there, I would fain recline,
And rest my limbs until the morning shown;
And through the eve some reasoning, I opine,
(For all may err) a weighty theme upon,
May not be deemed amiss.—Perchance some light
May on thy darkness break, and set thy footsteps right.

XX.

" Elder ! whatever themes," (our Founder said)
" My scant attainments fit me to essay,
Shall not avoided be from any dread
That thy strict logic may my faults betray ;
That all may err, means that our friends have strayed,
Not that ourselves have wandered from the way ;
It is a maxim to perversion grown,
And points to others' faults to hide our own.

XXI.

" But even as my Plymouth friend requests,
We'll seek that cottage—I have called it mine—
These hands have built it—but all friendly guests
May call it theirs, and, Elder, it is thine
Whilst thou sojournest here. Whoever rests
Beneath its roof, may not expect a fine,
A dungeon, scourge, or even banishment,
For heresy avowed, or doubted sentiment."

XXII.

They sought the cottage—its apartment rude,
But still a shelter from the cold and heat,
A cheerful fire and fur-clad settles shewed,
And other comforts, simple, plain and neat.
The Elder paused, and all the mansion viewed—
Then with a long-drawn sigh he took his seat,
And briefly added—" thou hast labored, friend,
Hard—very hard ! I hope for worthy end."

XXIII.

He paused again—Then solemnly began
A sad relation of the Church's state ;
O'er many a schism and false doctrine ran,
That had obtruded on their peace of late ;
But most alarming was our Founder's plan,
To leave things sacred to the free debate ;
To make faith bow to erring reason's shrine,
And mortal man a judge of creeds divine.

XXIV.

"This simple truth no christian man denies,"
He thus continued, "that the natural mind
Is prone to evil as the sparks to rise,
And to all good is obstinately blind;
Who then sees not, that looks with wisdom's eyes,
That God's elect should rule the human kind?
The good should govern, and the bad submit,
That saints alone are for dominion fit?"

XXV.

Our founder answered, "Art thou from the Pit?
Get thee behind me, if such thoughts be thine;
Did Christ his gospel to the world commit,
That his meek followers might in purple shine?
He spurned the foul temptation, it is writ,
And the Great Tempter felt his power divine;
Art thou far wiser than thy master grown,
And spurn'st a Heavenly for an Earthly crown?"

XXVI.

"Nay—nay—friend Williams!" the grave elder cried,
"It is that crown of glory to secure,
That the True Church should for her saints provide
The shield of law 'gainst heresy impure;
Quell every schism—crush the towering pride
Of the dark Tempter, ere his reign is sure;
For finds he many who are servants meet,
To sow the noxious tares among the wheat.

XXVII.

"Men ever busy—searching for the new—
Scanning our creed as if it doubtful were—
Such would we chain down to our doctrines true,
And the vain labor of conversion spare;
God may in time create their souls anew,
And of his grace give a redeeming share;
The whilst our Church their wanderings may restrain,
And to her creed their erring minds enchain.

XXVIII.

"A mortal thou!" our Founder here replied,
"Yet judge of conscience—searcher of the heart!
Thou art the elect!—but if that be denied,
How wilt thou prove it or its proofs impart?
God gave to man that bright angelic guide,
A reasoning soul, his being's better part,
He gave her freedom; but thou wouldst confine,
And cramp her action to that creed of thine.

XXIX.

"Who binds the soul extends the reign of Hell;
She's formed to err, but, erring, truth to find;
Pity her wanderings, but, O! never quell
The bold aspirings of this angel blind—
God is her strength within, and bids her spell,
By outward promptings, the eternal Mind—
Long may she wander still in quest of light—
But day will dawn at last upon a polar night."

XXX.

"A dangerous tenet that!" the Elder said,
"A fallen angel doubtless she may be,
If truth she find by natural reason's aid,
It ever leads her to some heresy;
Indeed, the truth too often is betrayed
To minds ill-fitted for inquiry free;
From bad to worse, from worse to worst we go,
And end our being in eternal wo.

XXXI.

"Nature's own truths do oft the mind mislead;
From partial glimpses men will judge the whole;
And it were better if our Church's creed
Were learning's object and its utmost goal;
Reason would then no higher purpose need,
Than, by it, point the yet erratic soul,
To her high hope and everlasting rest!"
Williams this heard, and spake with kindling breast,

XXXII.

"God gave man reason, that his soul might be
Free as his glance that spans the universe;
All things around him prompt inquiry free—
All do his reason to research coerce—
The Heavens—the Earth—the many breeding sea—
All have their shapes and qualities to nurse
The soul's aspirings, and, from blooming youth,
To ripe old age, provoke the quest of truth.

XXXIII.

"Truth! I would know thee were thou e'er so bad—
Bad as thy persecutors deem or fear—
Were thou in more than Gorgon terrors clad,
Thy glance a death to every feeling dear—
Taught thou that God a demon's passions had—
That Earth was Hell, and that the damn'd dwelt here,
And death the end of all—still would I know
The total Curse—the sum of being's wo.

XXXIV.

"Yet fear not this, for each new truth reveals
Of God a nearer and a brighter view,
Anticipation lags behind, and feels
How mean her thought at each discovery new;
Her stars were stones fired in revolving wheels,
Truth! thine are worlds self-moved the boundless through;
Who checks man's Reason in her heaven-ward flight,
Would shroud, O God! thy glorious works in night!

XXXV.

"Whence didst thou learn that the Almighty's plan
Required thy wisdom to protect and save—
That when he sent his Gospel down to man,
Thou to defend it must the soul enslave—
Enthrone deceit, and place beneath its ban
The honest heart, that dares its sentence brave?—
Full well I trow the Prince of darkness fits
The blood of martyrs shed by hypocrites."

XXXVI.

"No more friend Williams," said the Elder here,
"No more will we on this grave theme delay;
My hopes were high, and 'twas an object dear
To shed some light on thy benighted way;
But still wilt thou, with sinful purpose steer,
Thy little bark against the tempest's sway;
On may'st thou go—I cannot say God speed!
But would thy object were some better deed.

XXXVII.

"Couldst thou renounce thy purpose here to base
A State where heretics might refuge find,
I do not doubt that to some little grace
The Plymouth rulers would be well inclined;
But as it is, perhaps some other place,
Still more remote, may better suit thy mind—
But till the morn as may a guest befit,
My message hither do I pretermit."

XXXVIII.

Our founder pondered on the Elder's word;
What could this dark portentous message be,
That its strange birth were to the morn deferred,
Lest it should mar night's hospitality.
The wrath of Plymouth he had not incurred,
He with her Winslow was in amity;
Then what strange message had the Elder borne,
That utterance sought, and yet was hushed till morn.

XXXIX.

This cause, mysterious, darkling, undefined,
Did by degrees each cheerful thought efface,
And poured portentous glooms along his mind,
That seemed reflected by each friendly face;
The matron sighed, and childhood disinclined
To mirth or sport, sought slumber's soft embrace,
And soon the gathered night did all dispose,
To shun their boding thoughts in dull repose.

XL.

Again 'tis morn—The inmates of the cot
Rise from scant slumber, and their guest they greet—
"Williams!" he said, "it is my thankless lot,
Thee, with no pleasant message now to greet;
Nor hath our Winslow in his charge forgot—
(For his behest I bear and words repeat,)
His former friendship—but right loath is he,
To vex his neighbors by obliging thee.

XLI.

"In short thou art on Plymouth's own domain;
Beyond the Seekonk is the forest free—
This must thou leave—but there mayst thou maintain
Thy State unharmed, and still our neighbor be;
Fain had I spared thee this deep searching pain,
By showing thee thy dangerous heresy;
This may not be—Hence therefore must thou speed—
The Narragansets may protect thy creed."

XLII.

To breathless statues turned the listners stood—
As marble silent and as cold and pale—
With vacant gaze our sire the Elder viewed,
O'erwhelmed, confounded by this sudden bale—
As when some swain, deep in the sheltering wood,
Ere he has seen the tempest on the gale,
Marks the bright flash—the smitten senses reel—
He stands confounded ere he learns to feel.

XLIII.

At length reviving from the stunning shock—
His thoughts returning in a broken train
Across his mind, he thus the silence broke;
"I to my ancient friend may yet explain—
Just is my title here—the lands I took
Are part of Massasoit's wide domain,
And fairly purchased—Mine they dearly are—
Make this to Plymouth known, and Plymouth must forbear."

XLIV.

"And didst thou think," the Elder cried, "to win
Of Pagan chief a title here secure?
Why not derive it from that man of sin
At papal Rome—the Antichrist impure?—
Our Church of Truth, against the Heathens thin,
Asserts her Caanan, and will make it sure.
By the black Prophet was to Dudley shown
Thy Purchase feigned—by him to us made known."

XLV.

"My Purchase feigned!"—our Founder quickly cried,
"God made that Pagan, and to him He gave
Breath of this air, drink from yon crystal tide,
Food from these forest lawns and yonder wave;
Yea, He ordained this region, far and wide,
To be his home in life—in death his grave—
Is thy claim better? Canst thou trace thy right
From one superior to the God of Might?"

XLVI.

The Elder answered; "Thinkest thou this land
For demons foul, and their red votaries made?
Did not Jehovah, with his own right hand,
Tempest for Israel when the Heathen fled?
Does Plymouth's Church less in his favor stand?
Or spares he Devils for the savage red?
As to our title then, we trace it thus:
God gave James Stuart this and James gave us."

XLVII.

"God gave James Stuart this!" our Founder cried,
Up-starting from his seat as he began,
"God gave James Stuart this!"—a choking tide
Of kindling feeling through his bosom ran—
His better part the angry speech denied;
For all the christian strove against the man,
And strove not all in vain—yet, bursting forth,
His soul came big with grief, that stifled half her wrath.

XLVIII.

"God gave James Stuart this! "I marvel when!
Fain would I see the deed Omniscence wrote;
Elder! there are commandments counting ten,
Which Great Jehovah upon Sinai taught—
Has He of late exempted Plymouth's men—
Reversed his justice and made sin no fault?
Taught them to covet of their neighbor's store,
And licensed robbery of the weak and poor?

XLIX.

"Behold these hands which labor has made hard—
Look at this weather-beaten brow and face—
And ask yourself if to be thus debarred,
And hunted from their fruits like beast of chase,
Demands not meekness more than God has spared
To human heart in his abundant grace?
Followed e'en here! Again compelled to flee!
As if this desert were too good for me!

L.

"But I can go.—Ay! I can e'en submit—
God in his mercy will give shelter still—
Go—tell your Dudley in the book 'tis writ
That the oppressor shall hereafter feel;
Yet, gracious Lord, grant that repentance fit
Him to receive the everlasting seal
Of thy salvation—that his lost estate
Be yet revealed, ere it is all too late!

LI.

"Grieve not, my Mary!—Children! do not weep—
Though yonder verdant lawns, and opening flowers,
And groves whose shades the murmuring streamlet sweep,
Now perish all to us—yet on far shores,
Perchance by yonder bay or rolling deep,
Far from white brethren—mid barbarian powers,
Your father's hands another glade may form,
And rear another roof to shield you from the storm."

LII.

As here he ceased, in all the agony
Of mental pain he paced the cottage floor;
Absorbed within his woes, scarce did he see
The Elder pass, and leave his humble door;
His toils—cares—hopes—all lost—and poverty—
Sudden—gaunt—naked—spread its glooms once more;
A clashing sound first broke this mental strife;
'Twas Waban edging sharp his scalping knife.

LIII.

And such an ireful look—(his eyes so bright—
So played his muscles and so gnashed his teeth)—
Ne'er did red warrior show, save when in fight,
His weapon makes the hostile heart a sheath,
And forces out the soul:—He looked a sprite
Kindling a hell within—Recoiling 'neath
The horrid feelings that the image woke,
Our Founder backward shrunk, and thus the form bespoke.

LIV.

"What fiend, O Waban! thus inflames thy breast?"
The spell of frenzy at the accents broke—
The red man paused—his hand the bosom prest—
His eyes still flashing fire—and thus he spoke;
"My chief is angry with his pale-faced guest—
My heart has of my sachem's ire partook—
I can pursue—for viewless pinions lift
My nimble feet to speed thy vengeance swift."

LV.

A freezing horror crept through every vein,
As Williams heard the son of Nature speak,
Yet stood he humbled—for that ire profane
Was but his own that did new semblance take
In that wild man—there stood the ancient Cain
And here the modern, better skilled to check
The wayward passions—and how dark soe'er
The mirror there might be, the real form was here.

LVI.

"Waban!" at length he said, "I grieve to see
That all I sowed fell on a barren rock;
How could my brother hope to gladden me
By such a deed—thou dost thy sachem shock!
Oh! from thy savage nature try to flee—
Lay down thy murderous knife and tomahawk,
And dwell on better themes—new toils invite,
And high rewards my brother shall requite.

LVII.

Oft have I heard my hunter name with pride
His long, deep, hollow, arrow-winged canoe;
Now drag her from the fern to Seekonk's tide,
And bid her skim once more the waters blue;
She loves to rove, and we must far and wide
Seek other forests for a dwelling new;
Our toils here end—a cloud from Wamponand
Hangs o'er our glade, and blackens all the land.

LVIII.

A fickle race the red man's kindred were—
Free as the elk that roved their native wood—
Here did they dwell to-day, to-morrow there,
As want or pleasure ruled their changeful mood;
And Waban loved adventures bold and rare,
Nor heard with sorrow of a new abode;
And forth he goes to seek his long canoe,
And trim her breast to skim the waters blue.

LIX.

The whilst the infant group from noon to night,
Past here and there through all that cultured glade;
And sighed and wept, by turns, or sobbed outright,
As to its charms their last farewell they bade;
"Here father labored—here he slept till light
Renewed his toils," they often thought or said,
And still the springing tears suffused their eyes,
They dash them off—but still their sorrows rise.

LX.

They plucked the blossom from the blushing bush,
  They quaft the waters from the purling rill,
Their bread they scattered to the gentle thrush,
  That seemed half conscious of the coming ill;
The rabbit eyed them from his covert bush,
  Their crumbs supplied the little sparrow's bill;
And then they clasped their tender hands and sighed,
"Our little birds, farewell! a long farewell!"—and cried.

LXI.

Meantime the parents in the cottage sate—
  Their bosoms heaving and their thoughts in gloom—
"Oh! what," cried Mary, "is our coming fate—
  And where, my husband, is our future home?
Will not dire famine on our footsteps wait,
  And perils meet us wheresoe'er we roam?
Our harvest gone—who now can food supply?
Forced from this roof—where shall our children lie?"

LXII.

"Trust we in God!" our pious Founder said,
  "Doubt not the bounty of his Providence,
Who Israel's children through the desert led,
  And in all perils was their sure defence;
He bade us not this distant forest tread,
  To leave us here in want and penitence.
Warnings, my Mary, from strange source were given,
Such as I sometimes deem were sent from Heaven!

LXIII.

"Well can thy mind that stormy night recall,
  The last in Salem that I dare abide—
In fleecy torrents did the tempest fall,
  Our little dwelling reeled from side to side;
The fading brands just glimmered on the wall,
  Lonely I sate—my heart with anguish tried;
When lo! a summons at the door I heard,
Deemed it a wretch distressed—the pass unbarred.

LXIV.

" And straight appeared a venerable seer,
Such as on earth none ever saw before;
His temples spake at least their hundredth year,
In many a long and deeply furrowed score;
But, Oh! his eyes, in youthful glory clear,
Did in bright streams celestial radiance pour;
And then that face scarce seemed to veil the rays,
(Too bright for mortal!) of an angel's blaze.

LXV.

" And when he spake, methought the music clear
Of tongue seraphic, filled his Heavenly tone;
It came so full yet gently on my ear,
It well might serenade the Almighty's throne;
' Williams!' it said, ' I come on message here,
Of moment great to this blind age unknown;
Thou must not dally, or the tempest fear,
But fly by morn into the forest drear.

LXVI.

" ' Thou art to voyage an unexplored flood,
No chart is there thy lonely bark to steer,
Beneath her rocks, around her tempests rude,
And persecution's billows in her rear,
Shall shake thy soul till it is near subdued,
But when the welcome of *Whatcheer! Whatcheer!*
Shall greet thy ears from Indian multitude,
Cast thou the Anchor there, and Trust in God.'

LXVII.

" He past away, nor could I him detain
From the drear forest and the stormy night,
He only said he should be seen again
Where faith in freedom should my rest invite.
Oft have I dwelt on that prophetic strain,
Recalled the voice—yet can I but recite
The words it spake—Oh! had I heeded more
Its import high, and shunned this tyrant shore!

LXVIII.

"Deem not, my Mary, it a sinful thought,
That Heaven should give her counsels to restore
The soul to freedom.—Lo! what wonders wrought
The God of Christians for the Church of yore;
With heathen darkness was the conscience fraught,
And tyrants chained it to a barbarous lore—
To break like thraldom in a christian land,
Angels may speak, and God reveal his hand.

LXIX.

"This spot I rashly chose—no Indian train
Gave the glad welcome to my raptured ear,
And that mysterious form comes not again.
Inspiring courage—therefore hence we steer—
Nor land nor dwelling augur we to gain—
Until the greeting of Whatcheer! Whatcheer!
Our journey stay—there, there is our abode.
Our Anchor there—our Hope, Almighty God!"

LXX.

Thus spake our Founder—and with ready hand,
Her spirits cheered, did Mary now prepare
For their drear journey to another land—
Alas they knew not how—and knew not where.
At eventide, red Waban from the strand—
The children from the glade with cheerless air,
Revisited the cot.—One more sad night,
And hence they journey at the rising light.

LXXI.

Upon the cottage roof the Whippoorwill
That night sang mourful to the conscious glade;
The lonely owl forsook her valley still,
And perched and hooted in the neighboring shade;
The wolf returned, and lapped the purling rill,
Sate on its marge, and at the cottage bayed—
From all his howling depths the desert came,
And seemed his lost dominion to reclaim.

CANTO NINTH.

'Tis early morn—Pawtucket's torrent roar,
A solemn bass to Nature's anthem bold,
Alone wakes Williams' ear.—Its currents pour
Along with foaming haste, where they have rolled
Ages on ages—fretting, here from shore,
The basin broad, and there 'twixt hill and wold,
Furrowing their channel deep—far hastening on—
Now lost in shades—now glimmering in the sun.

II.

No thraldom had they known, save winter's frost;
No exile yet had their free bosom borne;
Deep in that glade, (now to our Founder lost)
Their wave eternal had a basin worn;
Oft thence their flow had borne the stealthy host,
In light canoes, before the dusk of morn,
Darkling to strike the foe—But now no more,
They blush to bear the freight of men that thirst for gore.

III.

Early that morn, beside the tranquil flood,
Where ready trimmed rode Waban's frail canoe,
The banished man, his spouse and children stood,
And bade their lately blooming hopes adieu.
As yet the mother had but half subdued
Despondent sorrow, and the briny dew
Stole frequent down her cheeks—Hers was the smart—
The searching anguish of the softer heart.

IV.

And as she viewed the illimitable shade,
The haunt of savage men and beasts of prey,
Thought of her children, and what fears arrayed,
Their, haply, long uncomfortable way;
"Ye houseless babes!" she in her anguish said,
"What crimes were yours, what dire offences, say,
That, even ye, should share this cruel doom,
Beg of barbarians bread, and savage deserts roam?"

V.

But, father Williams to his lot resigned,
Now cherished feelings of a loftier tone;
Heaven to vigour had restored his mind,
And firmly armed it for the task unknown;
He scantly glanced upon his toils behind;
His soul inspired did bolder visions own,
And from his breast dispelled each cheerless gloom,
And winged him onward to his destined home.

VI.

As the bold bird that builds her mansion high,
On some tall crag, or hemlock's lofty bough,
Deep in the desert, far from human eye,
And deems herself secure from every foe,
Does, in a pine's o'ershadowing branch, descry
The threatening eye-balls of the wild cat glow—
She spurns her eyry with a heaven-ward flight,
And builds upon some ash that crests the mountain's height.

VII.

Thus his vain toils he coldly now surveyed;
He'd sunk, but 'twas a bolder wing to try;
He snatched the weepers from the hated glade,
And bore them lightly to the shallop nigh;
Then sprang himself into the stern, and bade
The dusky pilot now his paddle ply;

Shoved from the bank the settling skiff descends
Low in the flood, and 'neath the burden bends.

VIII.

Now, with a giddy whirl, the wheeling prow,
Veering around, looks on the downward tide;
Then Waban's paddle pierced the glassy flow;
The mimic whirlpools past on either side;
The surface cleaves—the waters boil below,
The cot—the glade—the forests backward glide;
Until the shadows, moving as they flew,
Closed round the green, and shut the roof from view.

IX.

Pawtucket's murmurs die upon their ears,
As cleaves the expanded sheet the swift canoe;
And now the river's straightened pass appears,
And jutting mounds their lofty forests shew;
Each giant trunk a navy's timber rears—
Their mighty shadows o'er the flood they threw,
Shut out the Heavens, and scarce could glimmering day,
The long, dark, hollow, winding path display.

X.

Stern silence reigned o'er all the sable tide,
Broke only by the swarthy pilot's oar;
Beneath the arching boughs the wanderers glide,
And the dark riplings curl from shore to shore;
The startled wood-ducks 'neath the waters hide,
Or on fleet pinions through the branches soar;
Whilst overhead the rattling boughs, at times,
Speak where the streaked rackoon, or furious wild-cat climbs.

XI.

Oft, on the lofty banks from jutting rocks,
The buck looked down wild on the swift canoe;
Oft o'er the bramble leaped the wary fox
With bushy tail, and fur of ruddy hue;

Or wheeling high, and gathering still in flocks,
The dark-winged ravens, by their clamors, shew
Where the lone owl, perched on his moss-grown seat,
Insists, unvanquished yet, upon his drear retreat.

XII.

Far down the winding pass at length they spy,
Where wider currents, bright as liquid gold,
Spread glimmering in the sun—and, to the eye
Still further down, broad Narraganset rolled
His host of waters blue—blue as the sky;
For breezes from the hoary ocean cooled
His heaving breast, and joying in their glance,
From shore to shore, the wanton waters dance.

XIII.

And now did Williams in his mind debate,
Should he that night cleave Narraganset's flood,
Or on the Seekonk's bank till morning wait,
And scour the whilst Mooshausick's gloomy wood;
"Would that kind Heaven might there predestinate,
Religious Freedom! thy desired abode;"
(He often thought) "or where in ocean's arms,
Smiles wild Aquidnay, robed in virgin charms."

XIV.

Whilst thus he ponders, down the stream he sees,
Where from the invading cove the wood retires,
Dark wreaths of smoke curl o'er the lofty trees,
And deems that there some village wakes its fires.
"Waban," he says, "seest thou yon dusky breeze?
Say, from what town yon curling smoke aspires?
What valiant sachem holds dominion there?
What dreadful numbers leads he forth to war?"

XV.

"No town!—the feast of peace!"—the red man cried,
As still his swarthy arm impelled the oar;
"The clans from Narraganset far and wide,
And every tribe from Pokanoket's shore,

There smoke the pipe, and lay the axe aside,
The pipe which thou to Potowomet bore;
Much they rejoice—their ancient hate forego,
And deem my white chief a good Manittoo."

XVI.

A secret joy o'er father Williams' breast,
Stole like the fragrance of the balmy morn,
That breathes on sleep with fearful dreams opprest,
And wakes to its delights the wretch forlorn;
His toils and wanderings were not all unblest,
Some joys to others had his sufferings borne;
But promised good brings doubt to the distrest,
And thus with queries he his guide addressed.

XVII.

"What singing bird has, on the wandering wing,
Borne these strange tidings to my hunter's ear?
Where on her pinions poised, thus did she sing,
And with her faithless song his bosom cheer?"
Waban replied, whilst he was journeying
Toward the white man's town, through forests drear,
He on Cohannet's banks his brethren met,
Bound to the banquet of the calumet.

XVIII.

Now murmurs hoarse came on our Founder's ear,
That rose behind a cape from crowds unseen,
Then by the eastern marge their skiff they steer,
Till showed a tufted isle its welcome screen;
Veering to this, they found a prospect near
Of the red hosts that thronged the opposing green;
Hundreds on hundreds did their fires surround,
Ran on the shores, or verdant banks embrowned.

XIX.

Along the strand their speed the racers try,
Their flying feet scarce seem to touch the ground;
From goal to goal the nimble hunters fly;
Crowds shout above them, and the woods resound;

There did their swarthy limbs the wrestlers ply;
They tug—they writhe—they sweat—crowds shout around;
And here the circles watch the doubtful game,
Or greet the victor with a loud acclaim.

XX.

Then Williams saw, beneath a shady bower,
Miantonomi, sachem young and brave,
And Massasoit, Haup's kind sagamore,
And old Canonicus, so wise and grave,
Known by his peaceful pipe and tresses hoar,
And by the scarlet coat our founder gave;
Round them their captains intermingled stood,
All mild and peaceful now, though lately fierce for blood.

XXI.

From chief to chief, the calumet they past;
In solemn silence sate the council bound;
Each thrice inhaled, thrice forth the vapors cast;
First to the power that bids the thunder sound,
Then to the gods that ride the angry blast,
Then to the fiends that dwell beneath the ground;
These made propitious, they the hatchet gave,
The bloody hatchet, to a peaceful grave.

XXII.

"Waban," said Williams, "we may venture now,
But pause ye short of the sure arrow's flight;"
Instant the red man drove the foaming prow
Along the cleaving flood, and, at the sight
Of the red multitudes, the rose's glow
Fading, at once, left Mary's cheek all white;
And sudden fears her children's breasts surprise,
And, with their little hands, they trembling veil their eyes.

XXIII.

Full in the front of that vast multitude,
Within an arrow's flight, their skiff they stayed;
A sudden silence hushed the listening wood;

The crowds all paused, and with wild eyes surveyed
The pale-faced group—which in like stillness viewed
The wondering throngs.—At length the woodland glade
Moves with their numbers—down the banks they pour,
Swarming and gathering on the dark'ning shore.

XXIV.

As when some urchin, with a heedless blow,
The insect nations of the hive alarms;
Down from their cells the watchful myriads flow,
And earth and air rolls black with murmuring swarms;
So from the woods the wondering warriors go,
So o'er the dark'ning strand their number forms;
None, save their haughty chiefs remain behind,
And they the lofty banks and forest margin lined.

XXV.

Then silence reigned again—but still they stared,—
Some clasped their knives, and some their arrows drew;
Then from his seat his form our Founder reared,
Beneath him rocking rolled the frail canoe;
His hand he raised, and manly forehead bared,
And straight their former friend the sachems knew;
Netop, Whatcheer! broke on the listening air;
Whatcheer! Whatcheer! was echoed here and there.

XXVI.

And straight the kindling crowds burst on his ear,
Their shouts embodied sought the joyous sky,
With open arms, and greeting of Whatcheer,
Lived all the shores, and banks, and summits high;
Whatcheer! Whatcheer! resounded far and near,
Whatcheer! Whatcheer! the hollow woods reply;
Whatcheer! Whatcheer! swells the exulting gales,
Sweeps o'er the laughing hills, and trembles through the vales.

XXVII.

Mooshausick, quick with future glories, hears,
Rolls up a brighter wave and downward pours,

To Narraganset's bay the shout he rears,
The bay resounds it to rejoicing shores;
Coweset's wilds repeat the echoing cheers,
Pocasset answers from her mountain bowers;
Wild o'er the joyous isles the rapture roves,
And fair Aquidnay smiles, and waves her blooming groves.

XXVIII.

"Speed! Waban, speed!" with haste our Founder cried,
Soon as the hollow murmurs died afar;
With lusty arm the hunter clove the tide,
The swift canoe seemed moving through the air;
One instant more, and, leaping from her side,
Our sire rejoicing trod the margin fair;
And round him gathered, on the borders stood,
In cheerful throngs, the Indian multitude.

XXIX.

Miantonomi, stepping from the crowd,
Stretched forth his brawny hand, and cried "Whatcheer!
Welcome, my brother! say, what lowering cloud,
O'er Seekonk's eastern marge, impels thee here;
Be it the Pequot in his numbers proud,
I hold his greeting in this glittering spear;
But, oh! perchance my brother seeks this place,
To share with us the sacred rites of peace."

XXX.

"Not so, brave chief—It is to seek a home,
By seer announced, by Heaven to me assigned;
Yonder abode lies wrapt in sable gloom,
Sprung not from Pequot, but the Plymouth kind;
My promised harvest blighted in the bloom,
My voiceless roof—all, all have I resigned,
And hither come to seek Mooshausick's plain,
And beg the gift once proffered me in vain."

XXXI.

Good Massasoit, who did these accents hear,
Would now our Founder greet—and with a face,

That spake a sorrow deep, and most sincere,
"Long have I strove," he gravely said, "to guess
What Manit most my Plymouth friends revere;
For aye their deeds their better words efface—
Their tongues much speak of spirit good and great;
Their hands much do the work of Chepians hate."

XXXII.

Here grave Canonicus came from the throng—
"Welcome, my son!" exclaimed the aged chief,
"Bear thou the inflictions of thy kindred's wrong,
Like a brave man, not with a woman's grief;
The lands thou seest shall all to thee belong;
And for thy comforts lost, a moment brief
Shall e'en their loss repair—o'er yonder height
Is the domain where Chepian ruled of late.

XXXIII.

"There all abandoned by his Priest it lies—
Abandoned by his slaves, for slaves had he,
Who tilled his field, and made his mansion rise,
Adorned with mats and colors fair to see;
The Priest is gone—how, nothing care the wise;
His timid followers from their labors flee—
All fear to dwell within the fiend's control,
For who but Chepian's Priest can Chepian rule."

XXXIV.

Thus spake Canonicus, the wise and old;
With shouts the warriors their accordance shewed,
Then turned and sought the late forsaken hold;
Our sire, the matron and her charge pursued;
The following nations far behind them rolled—
In march triumphal moved the multitude,
Cheering the exiles home; and as they sped,
Earth rumbled under their far thundering tread.

XXXV.

The forest branches, woven overhead,
Shut out the day, and cast a twilight gloom;

Where now long since extends the verdant mead,
Shines the fair palace, or the gardens bloom,
Frowned one green vault above—the palisade
Of trunks, of brambles, boscage, brake and broom,
Beneath it vexed the warriors' surly mood,
And cracked and crashed the thickets as they trod.

XXXVI.

They gained the height where now the Muses reign—
Where now Brown's bounty to the human mind
Links Earth and Heaven—the fruits of honest gain
Moulding the youthful soul by taste refined
To truth's eternal quest—With what disdain
Frowns such high bounty on a meaner kind?—
But this in after times—for forests then
Mantled the height, and swarmed with savage men.

XXXVII.

Thence, from its frowning brow our Founder sees
Mooshausick rolling to his watery vasts;
Across his flood the overhanging trees
Lock their thick shadowy arms—thick as the masts,
In after times, should on the wanton breeze
Roll forth their spangled banners—when the blasts,
Fraught with the volume of the cannon's voice,
Bid a whole nation through its realms rejoice.

XXXVIII.

And thence with prescient eye, he gazes far
O'er the rude sites of palaces and shrines,
Where Grecian beauty to the buxom air,
In after times, should rise in beaming lines;
Ay, almost hears the future pavements jar
Beneath a people's wealth, and half divines,
Religious Freedom! what bright glories wait,
Thy earliest altars—thy predestined state.

XXXIX.

Then down the steep by paths scored in its side,
Where frequent deer had sought the floods below,

He past, still following his dusky guide,
And stooping oft 'neath overhanging bough,
Till a broad cultured field expanded wide,
Betwixt dense thickets and Mooshausick's flow.
Its deep green rows of waving maize foretold
Abundant harvest, from a fertile mould.

XL.

The Priest's forsaken lodge rose in the mid,
Beside a fountain on a verdant lawn;
Its arches broad by climbing vines were hid,
Spacious it seemed and like a chieftain's shown;
Then Williams thought of what his warrior did,
Upon that bloody night in forests lone;
He mourns the fate that urged the felon's doom,
Yet sees its fruits a temporary home.

XLI.

But still some scruples do his mind assail;
What horrid rites had made the place profane!
When thus the chief—"No more my son bewail
Thy comforts lost—let the Great Spirit reign
Where Chepian reigned—ay, let thy God prevail—
Be thou his Priest and this thy own domain—
From wild Pawtucket to Pawtuxet's bounds,
To thee and thine be all the teeming grounds.

XLII.

High thanks sire Williams paid—but as he spake,
Came o'er his mind a feeling passing strange;
A Prophet's rapture did his bosom wake;
For, at that moment down the boundless range
Of angel spheres, did some bright being take
Wing to his soul, and wrought to suited change
The visual nerve, and straight in outward space,
Its form stood manifest, in all its heavenly grace.

XLIII.

At once he cried, "I see! I see the seer!
His very form, his very shape and air!

By yonder fount—the same his robes appear;
The same his radiant eyes and flowing hair;
Mary! my children! come! his accents hear;
See age and youth one heavenly beauty share!"
They with him moved, (yet ne'er the vision saw;)
Until the father paused, transfixed in sacred awe.

XLIV.

For strange to tell, youth's lingering light began
To spread fresh glories o'er that aged face;
Till over beard, and hair, and visage wan,
Burst the full splendor of angelic grace;
A lambent flame around the forehead ran,
And rainbow hues the earthly robes displace;
The curling locks, like beams of living light,
Streamed back, and glowed insufferably bright.

XLV.

The figure seemed to grow—its dazzling eyes
Were for a space upon sire Williams bent,
Then upward turned.—It, pointing to the skies,
Spake Hope in God, with silence eloquent.
Still did it brighten—still its stature rise—
With Heaven's full glories seemed it to augment—
The pilgrim staff no longer did it hold;
But on an Anchor leant, that blazed ethereal gold.

XLVI.

Our Father gazed, and, from that heavenward eye,
Saw the pure streams of angel radiance flow;
An inward glory, as it towered on high,
Filled all the stature to the lofty brow;
And then the shape translucent seemed to grow,
And still expanding fade its glories fair,
Like those of evening, or the radiant bow,
Till all dissolving in transparent air,
It melted from the sight, and left no traces there.

XLVII.

Then, on the bending knees, he bowed to own
The Heaven-born vision, and his soul declare;
His wife and children, by him kneeling down,
Sent up their hearts upon the wings of prayer;
The dusky nations formed a crescent far,
Their ears in awful silence did they bend;
Hills, vales and floods and forests listening were—
Force to each word their faithful echoes lend,
And with their Ruler's prayers did theirs to Heaven ascend.

XLVIII.

"Mysterious Power! who dost in wonders speak,
We note thy tokens and their import spell;
Let Persecution still its vengeance wreak—
Let its fierce billows roll with mountain swell,
Here must we Anchor, and their force repel.
Here, in Religious Freedom moored, our State
Shall hold the conscience sacred—ever free—
Here shall she breast the coming storms of fate,
And ride triumphant o'er the raging sea,
Her well-cast Anchor here, her lasting Hope in Thee!

XLIX.

"Here, thy assurance gives our wanderings rest,
And points where all our future toils must be;
Lord! be our labors by thy mercies blest,
And send their fruits to far posterity;
Let our example still the conscience free,
Where'er she dwells by tyrant force enchained,
And whilst the thraldom lasts, Oh! let her see,
Her ark of safety here, where, unprofaned
By Persecution's brands, free altars are maintained.

L.

"Accept, O Lord! our thanks for mercies past;
Thou wast our cloud by day, and fire by night,

Whilst yet we journeyed through the dreary vast—
Thou Canaan more than givest to our sight.
Lord! 'tis possessed not seen from Pisgah's height.
We deeply feel this high beneficence;
And ages far shall o'er our graves recite
Of thy protecting grace their Father's sense,
And, when they name their homes, proclaim Thy
PROVIDENCE!"

NOTES.

CANTO FIRST.

STANZA I.

I sing the trials and the sufferings great,
Which father Williams in his exile bore,
That he the conscience bound might liberate,
And her religious rights the soul restore.

"Roger Williams was born of reputable parents in Wales, A. D. 1598. He was educated at the University of Oxford; was regularly admitted to Orders in the Church of England, and preached for some time as a minister of that Church; but on embracing the doctrines of the Puritans, he rendered himself obnoxious to the laws against the non-conformists, and embarked for America, where he arrived with his wife, whose name was Mary, on the 5th of February, A. D. 1631." He had scarcely landed ere he began to assert the principle of religious freedom, and insist on a rigid separation from the Church of England. A declaration that the magistrate ought not to interfere in matters of conscience could not fail to excite the jealousy of a government constituted as that of Massachusetts then was, and this jealousy was roused into active hostility when, in the April following his arrival, he was called by the Church of Salem as teaching Elder under their then Pastor, Mr. Skelton.

"Of this appointment," says Winthrope, "the Governor of Massachusetts was informed, who immediately convened a Court in Boston to take the subject into consideration." Their deliberations resulted in a letter addressed to Mr. Endicot, of Salem, to this effect: "That whereas Mr. Williams had refused to join the churches at Boston, because they would not make a public declaration of their repentance, for having communion with the Churches of England while they tarried there, and besides had declared his opinion that the magistrate might not punish the breach of the Sabbath, nor any other offence that was a breach of the first table; and therefore they marvelled they would choose him without

advising with the council, and withal desired him that they would forbear to proceed until they had considered about it."

This interference of the government forced him to leave Salem. "He removed to Plymouth and was engaged as assistant to Mr. Ralph Smith, the Pastor of the church at that place. Here he remained until he found his views of Religious Toleration and strict non-conformity gave offence to some of his hearers, when he returned again to Salem, and was settled there after Mr. Skelton's death, which took place on the 2d of August, 1634." In this situation Williams preached against the cross in the ensign, as a relique of papal superstition. His preaching, however, on this topic does not seem to have been a subject of complaint, only as it led some of his friends to the indiscretion of defacing the colors. His persecutors, in excusing this act to the government of England, say that they did so "with as much wariness as they might, being doubtful themselves of the lawfulness of the cross in an ensign." But though he may have given no offence by declaring an opinion on this subject so little at variance with their own, yet when he ventured to speak against the king's patent by which he had granted to his subjects the lands which belonged to the Indians; and above all to maintain that the civil magistrate ought not to interfere in matters of conscience, except for the preservation of peace, his presence within the jurisdiction of Massachusetts could no longer be tolerated. A summons was granted for his appearance at the next court.

He appeared accordingly. "It was laid to his charge," says Winthrope, "that, being under question before the Magistracy and Churches for divers dangerous opinions, viz. that the magistrate ought not to punish for the breaches of the first table, otherwise than in such cases as did disturb the public peace. 2d That he ought not to tender an oath to an unregenerate man. 3d That a man ought not to pray with such though wife, children, &c. 4th That a man ought not to give thanks after sacrament nor after meat, &c. and that other churches were about to write the church of Salem to admonish him of these errors, notwithstanding the church had since called him to the office of Teacher."

These charges having been read, all the magistrates and ministers concurred in denouncing the opinions of Williams as erroneous and dangerous, and agreed that the calling him to office at that time was a great contempt of authority. He and the church of Salem were allowed until the next General Court to consider of these charges, and then either to give satisfaction to the court or else to expect sentence.

Much warmth of feeling was exhibited in the discussion of these charges; and in the course of the debate it seems the Ministers were required to give their opinions severally. All agreed that he who asserted that the civil magistrate ought not to interfere in case of heresy, apostacy,

&c. ought to be removed, and that other churches ought to request the magistrates to remove him. Nothing will give a better idea of the state of feeling on this occasion than the fact that when the town of Salem at this time petitioned, claiming some land in Marblehead as belonging to the town, the petition was refused a hearing, on the ground that the church of Salem had chosen Mr. Williams her teacher, and by such choice had offered contempt to the magistrates.

The attendance of all the Ministers of the Bay at the next General Court was requested. This was held in the month of Nov. 1635. Before this venerable congregation of all the dignitaries of the church, Williams appeared and defended his opinions. His defence it seems was not satisfactory. They offered him further time for conference or disputation. This he declined, and chose to dispute presently. Mr. Hooker was appointed to dispute with him. But Mr. Hooker's logic, seconded as it was by the whole civil and ecclesistical power of Massachusetts, could not force him to recognise the right of the civil magistrate to punish heresy, or to admit that the king's patent could of itself give a just title to the lands of the Indians. The consequence was that on the following morning he was sentenced to depart, within six weeks, out of the jurisdiction of Massachusetts.

Such were the causes of Williams' banishment, and such the circumstances under which the decree was passed. He was a man who fearlessly asserted his principles, and practiced upon them to their fullest extext. Persecution could not drive him to a renunciation of his opinions. His observance of any principle which he adopted was conscienciously strict; but this very strictness of observance had its advantage in enabling him with more certainty to detect any latent error which his opinions involved. He was as free to declare his errors as he was to assert whatever appeared to him to be right. His very honesty in this respect has given occasion to his enemies to brand his character with the charge of inconsistency and apostacy; but he remained true to every principle espoused by him which posterity has since sanctioned, and inconstant only in those things which are unimportant in themselves, and which are unsettled even in the present day. A tacit confession of his own fallibility was implied in the great principle of which he was the earliest asserter, that government ought not to interfere in matters of conscience; and therein consisted a wide difference between his errors, whatever they were, and those of his persecutors. This fact, in estimating the character of Williams, cannot be too well considered.

"Subsequently to his banishment, he was permitted to remain until spring, on condition that he did not attempt to draw others to his opinions." But the friends of Williams could not consent to see their favorite pastor leave them, without frequently visiting him whilst they yet had

an opportunity. In these interviews the plan of establishing a colony in the Narraganset country, where the principle of Religious Freedom, (the assertion of which had been the chief cause of his banishment,) should be carried into effect, was discussed and matured. It is also highly probable that he did not fail to do what he conceived to be the duty of a faithful pastor in other respects. At length the rumor of these meetings reached the ears of the civil authorities; and in January, 1635, (O. S.) "The governor and assistants," says Winthrope, "met in Boston to consider about Mr. Williams; for they were credibly informed, that he, notwithstanding the injunction laid upon him, (upon liberty granted him to stay until spring,) not to go about to draw others to his opinions, did use to entertain company in his house, and to preach to them even of such points as he had been sentenced for; and it was agreed to send him into England by a ship then ready to depart. The reason was because he had drawn about twenty persons to his opinions, and they were intended to erect a plantation about the Narraganset bay, from whence the infection would easily spread into these churches, the people being many of them much taken with an apprehension of his godliness. Whereupon a warrant was sent to him to come presently to Boston to be shipped, &c.—He returned for answer, (and divers of Salem came with it,) that he could not without hazard of his life, &c. Whereupon a pinnace was sent with commission to Captain Underhill, &c. to apprehend him, and carry him on board the ship which then rode at Nantascutt. But when they came to his house they found he had been gone three days, but whither they could not learn."

It thus appears that the object of the government, in directing his immediate apprehension at this time, was to prevent the establishment of a colony in which the civil authority should not be permitted to interfere with the religious opinions of the citizens.

Williams was in the thirty-seventh or thirty-eighth year of his age, at the time of his banishment. He fled to a wilderness inhabited only by savages. The two principal tribes—the Narragansets and Wampanoags—had but a short time before he entered their country been engaged in open hostilities. The government of Plymouth had on one occasion extended its aid to its early friend and ally, Massasoit, chief sachem of the Wampanoags. This interference had smothered but not extinguished the flame. With these warring tribes, one of which (the Narragansets) was a very martial and numerous people, and exceedingly jealous of the whites, Williams was under the necessity of establishing relations of amity. He himself says that he was forced to travel between their sachems to satisfy them and all their dependent spirits of his honest intentions to live peaceably by them. He acted the part of a peace-maker amongst them, and eventually won, even for the benefit of his persecutors, the confidence of

the Narragansets. It was through his influence that all the Indians in the vicinity of Narraganset bay were, shortly after his settlement at Mooshausick, united, and their whole force, under the direction of the very men who had driven him into the wilderness, brought to co-operate with the Massachusetts forces against the Pequots. See Winthrope's Journal —and a Sketch of the Life of Roger Williams, appended to the first volume of the Rhode-Island Historical Collections, for the above extracts.

STANZA XII.

Much less my consort and these pledges dear.

Williams was the father of six children, viz—Mary, Freeborn, Providence, Mercy, Daniel and Joseph. I am not able to determine their number at the time of his banishment.

STANZA XL.

Whom God had summoned from the bigot's slough, &c.

Perhaps this metaphor may be deemed harsh; but yet what single term will better characterize a government where persecution was adopted upon principle, and where every effort which was made, by the over-heated zealot, only had the effect of sinking him still deeper in his imaginary perplexities.

STANZA XLV.

Thrice did our northern tiger seem to come.

Frequently called the Panther—the Cat of the Mountain, or Catamount. There is indeed no animal of America entitled to the appellation of the Panther; but this name is frequently applied to the animal mentioned, and is adopted in this production for that reason.

STANZA LXI.

'Twas Waban's cry at which the monsters ran.

The Indians imitate very perfectly the cry of wild beasts, and use that art in conveying signals, and for other purposes, during their huntings, and other expeditions. The known antipathy between the wolf and the catamount or panther, and the superiority of the latter over the former, may justify the text.

STANZA LXIX.

Where never shall the flame of fagot glow,
Kindled by wrath of persecuting men.

I know not that the fagot has been very generally used in any protestant country for the extirpation of heresy, yet, its very general application to that purpose by Roman Catholics, has, by common consent, made it the appropriate emblem of persecution in all countries.

STANZA LXXII.

Until Sowaniu's breezes scatter flowers again.

Sowaniu, or the Paradise of the Indians, was supposed to be an island in the far southwest. It was the favorite residence of their great god, Cawtantowit, and the land of departed spirits. The balmy southwest was a gale breathed from the Heaven of the Indians.

STANZA LXXXIII.

"And may the Manitto of dreams," he said, &c.

Manitto—a God. It is a word which seems to have been applied to any extraordinary power, or mysterious influence. Any astonishing effect, produced by a cause which the Indians could not comprehend, they appear to have ascribed to the agency of a Manitto. It is natural for man to draw his ideas of power or causation, from what he feels in himself; and when he does so he will ascribe the effects which he observes to the influence of mind. As he advances in knowledge the number of these mysterous agents diminish, until at last he is forced upon the idea of one great, designing, first cause or agent. Man, from his very constitution, therefore, must be a believer in the existence of God. He approaches a knowledge of His unity by degrees, and improves in his religious opinions in the same manner as he advances in the science of astronomy. How essential then is that freedom of opinion which our founder sought to establish!

CANTO SECOND.

STANZA XIII.

In a vast eagle's form embodied, He
Did o'er the deep on outstretched pinions spring.

It was the belief of the Chippeways, a tribe supposed to have descended from the same original stock (Lenni Lenape) with the Narragansets, that, before the earth appeared, all was one vast body of waters—That the Great Spirit, assuming the shape of a mighty eagle, whose eyes were as fire, and the sound of whose wings was as thunder, passed over the abyss, and that, upon his touching the water, the Earth rose from the deep. It was a prevailing tradition among the Delawares and other tribes, according to Heckewelder, that the Earth was an island, supported on the back of a huge tortoise, called in the text Unamis. It is the object of the author to embrace in the text a selection of their scattered traditions on the subject of creation, and to give them something like the consistency of a system. Waban, therefore, adopting their leading ideas,

has drawn out his description into the appropriate sequency of events.—Their Creator was a Manittoo, a mysteriously operating power, and of the same nature with that principle of causation which they felt in themselves, as constituting their own being. The term *Cowwewonck*, in the Narraganset dielect, signified the soul, and was derived from *Cowwene*, to sleep; because, said they, it operates when the body sleeps. Hence in the text, whilst the Great Spirit slept, He is represented as commencing the work of creation—operating on the immense of waters as a part of his own being, and imparting to it organic existences, (as the soul from itself creates its own conceptions,) thus giving a sort of *dreamy* existence to the earth and all living things, ere he assumed the shape of the eagle, and at his fiat imparted to them substantial form and vital energy. The idea, that the Earth was raised out of the bosom of the Ocean, seems to have been pretty general amongst the Aborigines.

STANZA XIX.

Yet man was not; then great Cawtantowit spoke
To the hard mountain crags, and called for man.

According to the traditions of the Narragansets, the Great Spirit formed the first man from a stone, which, disliking, he broke, and then formed another man and woman from a tree; and from this pair sprang the Indians.

STANZA XXII.

Then did he send Yotaanit on high—

Yotaanit was the God of Fire; Keesuckquand, God of the Sun; Nanapaushat, of the Moon, and Wamponand was the ruling Deity of the East.

STANZA XXIII.

All things were formed, thus, from materials good,
And what had been refused was foul and bad;
But it had felt the influence of the God—
(How should it not?)—

Heckewelder ascribes to the Indians the opinion that nothing bad could proceed from the Great and Good Spirit. Waban is here speaking in canformity to that opinion. Hence he represents the creation of Chepian, or the evil principle, as an incidental but necessary effect, yet forming no part of the original design.

STANZA XXVII.

And manittoos, that never death shall fear,
Do too within this mortal body rest.

They conceive, says Williams, that there are many gods, or divine powers, within the body of man—in his pulse, heart, lungs, &c.

STANZA XXVIII.

But if a sluggard and a coward, then
To rove all wretched in the glooms of night.

"They believe that the souls of men and women go to the southwest—their great and good men to Cawtantowit his house, where they have hopes, as the Turks have, of carnal joys. Murtherers, liars, &c. their soules (say they) wander restless abroad."—Williams' Key.

STANZA XXXVIII.

This yet unproved and doubted by the best.

The Charter of Pennsylvania was granted in 1681. The philanthropic Penn was preceded by Williams in the adoption of a mild and pacific policy toward the natives. Both seem to have been equally successful.

STANZA XLVI.

Ere dark pestilence
Devoured his warriors—laid its hundreds low,
That sachem's war-whoop roused to his defence
Four thousand bow-men, and he still can show
A mighty force.

The pestilence, to which Waban has reference, is that which shortly preceded the arrival of the Plymouth planters. The Wampanoags, before this calamity, were relatively a powerful people. Patuxet, afterwards Plymouth, was then under the government of their sachem, who, at times, made it his place of residence. Indeed, the whole country between Seekonk and the ocean, eastward, seems to have been occupied by tribes more or less subject to him. Those toward the Cape and about Buzzard's Bay were, however, rather his tributaries than his subjects. The different clans or communities, in this extensive territory, were under the government of many petty sachems, who regarded Ousamequin (afterwards Massasoit) as their chief. Availing themselves of the misfortune of their neighbors, the Narragansets extended their conquests eastward over some of these under-sachems, and when Ousamequin fled from Patuxet to Pokanoket, to avoid the devouring sickness, he found, not only Aquidnay, but a part of Pokanoket, subject to his enemies.—(See note to stanza xxxiv. canto iv.) Pokanoket was the Indian name of the neck of land between Taunton river on the east, and Seekonk and Providence rivers on the west. Mount-Hope, or Haup as it is called in the text, forms its southeastern extreme. The number of warriors stated in the text, as subject to Ousamequin, is hypothetical. Some of the Nipnets were tributary to the Narragansets, but the greater part of them were the allies or subjects of the Wampanoag chief.

STANZA XLVI.

His highest chief is Corbitant the stern—
He bears a fox's head and panther's heart.

Mr. Winslow, who had frequent conferences with this chief, represents him as "a hollow hearted friend to the Plymouth planters, a notable politician," &c. He with others was suspected of conspiring against the whites, and Captain Standish was sent, on one occasion, to execute summary justice upon him and his conferates. He however escaped, and afterwards made his peace with them through the mediation of Massasoit.—His residence was at Mattapoiset, now Swanzey.

STANZA XLVII.

Yet oft their children bleed
When the far west sends down the Maquas fell—
Warriors who hungry on their victims steal,
And make of human flesh a dreadful meal.

In compliance with the common orthography, the name of this tribe is written *Maqua*. Williams says, that in the Narraganset dialect they were called Mohawaugsuck, or Mauquauog, from mobo, to eat; and were considered Cannibals. It is probable, from its location, that he speaks of the same tribe under the name of Mitucknechakick, or tree eaters—"a people," says he, "so called, living between three and four hundred miles west into the land, from their eating Mituckquash; that is trees.—They are men-eaters—they set no corn, but live on the bark of the chesnut and other fine trees, &c.—Again he says, "The Maquaogs, or men eaters, that live two or three hundred miles West, &c. Thus it is plain that the Maquas were considered, by the Narragansets and their neighboring tribes, Cannibals.

STANZA XLVIII.

Here lies Namasket tow'rd the rising sun.

Namasket was within the limits of the territory which now constitutes the township of Middleborough, and was about fifteen miles from Plymouth.

Here farther down, Cohannet's banks upon,
Spreads broad Pocasset, strong Apannow's hold.

The territory under that name now forms a part of Troy, Mass. and all or nearly all Tiverton, R. I. The territory south to the sea, was called Sagkonate, now written Sekonnet, or Seconnet, forming at this time the township of Little-Compton. The Northeasterly part of the island of Aquidnay was also called Pocasset. This word may be a derivative from the Indian name of the strait separating the island from the main land.

The name of the chieftain in the text must be received exclusively on Waban's authority.

STANZA L.

Two mighty chiefs, one cautious, wise and old,
One young and strong, and terrible in fight,
All Narraganset and Coweset hold;
One lodge they build—one council fire they light.

In a deposition of Williams, dated the 18th June 1682, he says, that it was the general and constant declaration that the father of Canonicus had three sons—that Canonicus was his heir—that his youngest brother's son, whose name was Miantonomi, was his marshal, or executioner, and did nothing without his consent.

Five thousand warriors give their arrows flight.

This is the number at which Williams estimates them. Calendar says they were a numerous, rich and powerful people, and though they were, by some, said to have been less fierce and warlike than the Pequots, yet it appears that they had, before the English came, not only increased their numbers by receiving many who fled to them from the devouring sickness or plague in other parts of the land; but they had enlarged their territories both on the Eastern and Western boundaries. Their numbers must have dimisished rapidly, as Hutchinson estimates their warriors in 1675 at two thousand; this estimate, however, might not embrace those tribes which were subject to, or dependant on them when Williams entered the country. They seem to have been a people greatly in advance of their neighbors. They excelled in the manufacture of Wampompeag, and supplied other nations with it—also with pendants, bracelets, tobacco pipes of stone, and pots for cookery. After the arrival of the Whites they traded with them for their goods, and supplied other tribes with them at an advance.

STANZA LI.

Dark rolling Seekonk does their realm divide
From Pokanoket, Massasoit's reign—

Under the general name of Narraganset was included Narraganset proper, and Coweset. Narraganset proper extended south from what is now Warwick to the ocean; Coweset, from Narraganset northerly, to the Nipmuck country, which now forms Oxford, Mass. and some other adjoining towns. The western boundaries of Narraganset and Coweset cannot be definitely ascertained. Gookins says, the Narraganset jurisdiction extended thirty or forty miles from Seekonk river and Narraganset bay, including the islands, southwesterly to a place called Wekapage,

four or five miles to the Eastward of Pawcatuck river—that it included part of Long Island, Block-Island, Coweset and Niantick, and received tribute from some of the Nipmucks. After some research, I am induced to believe that the Nianticks occupied the territory now called Westerly; If so, then the jurisdiction of the Narragansets extended to the Pawcatuck, and perhaps beyond it. The tribe next westward was that which dwelt "in the twist of Pequot river," now called the Thames; and was under the control of the fierce and warlike Uncas; a chief who had rebelled against Sassacus, the Pequot sachem, and detached from its allegiance a considerable portion of his nation, of which he had formed a distinct tribe.

STANZA LIII.

Awanux gave him strength, and, with strange fear,
Did M'antonomi at the big guns start.

"We cannot yet conceive," says Mourt in his journal, "but that he [Massasoit] is willing to have peace with us; for they have seen our people sometimes alone, two or three in the woods at work and fowling, whereas they offered them no harm: and, especially, because he hath a potent adversary, the Narrohigansets, that are at war with him, against whom he thinks we may be of some strength to him; for our pieces are terrible unto them."

STANZA LXXIV.

At length his vision opened on a space,
Level and broad, and stretching without bound
Far tow'rd the south—nor rose, o'er all its face,
A tree, or shrub, or rock or swelling mound.

It may excite our wonder that the barren plains of Seekonk should have been at first selected by our Founder for a place of settlement. But it is possible that at the time when the selection was made they were in a state, as to fertility, different from their present. However this may be, one thing is certain, that Williams made the selection during the winter, when vegetation afforded no criterion of the quality of the soil, whilst its very nakedness was in some respects a recommendation. It was an object with the early settlers to establish themselves in the neighborhood of some clearing, and particularly on meadows in the vicinity of rivers. These yielded pasturage through the summer, and forage for their cattle during winter, and, it may be added, land for tillage without the preparatory steps of clearing.

CANTO THIRD.

STANZA VII.

War! War! my brother.

Williams says that, at the time of his first entering the Narraganset country, a great contest was raging between Canonicus and Miantonomi on one side, and Massasoit or Ousamequin on the other. Williams, at this time, had come to the resolution of settling at Seekonk, on a part of the lands belonging to the latter sachem. But should actual hostilities be commenced between these tribes, his situation would become peculiarly dangerous, occupying as he would, lands on the frontiers of the weaker party. The Narragansets might regard his settlement as a mere trading establishment, supplying their enemies with arms. Besides, the Narragansets and Wampanoags, in many instances, laid claim to the same lands. [See note to stanza the thirty-fourth, canto fourth.] To obtain a peacable possession of these lands it was necessary to have the consent of both. A reconciliation, therefore, of the contending tribes became indispensable. Williams incidentally mentions that he travelled between them to satisfy them of his intentions to live peaceably by them, and it is hardly possible that the equally necessary object of their reconciliation was neglected. Indeed we find, shortly after Williams entered their country, these chiefs, so recently hostile, amicably granting their lands to him and his associates, and one of them yielding to the authority of the other. Hence we may infer, that Williams not only attempted to pacify them, but that his efforts were crowned with success.

Ousamequin, or Ashumequin, was the name of the Wampanoag chief, until about the time of the Pequot war, when he assumed the name of Massasoit, or Massasoyt, for it is variously written. The latter is used in the text as that by which he is most generally designated. It was common for the Indians to change their names. That of Miantonomi was originally Mecumeh.

STANZA VIII.

The Narraganset hatchet stained with gore—
Miantonomi lifts it o'er his head,
Gives the loud battle yell, and names our valiant dead.

To name the dead was considered a great indignity, and, among chiefs, a sufficient cause of war. Philip pursued one who had thus offended to Nantucket. The life of the offender was saved only by the interference of the Whites. To avoid uttering the names of the dead they used circumlocutions, such as *Sachem-aupan*, *Neemat-aupan*; the sachem that was here, our brother that was here.

STANZA XI.

And Annawan, who saw in after times
Brave Metacom, and all of kindred blood,
Slain, or enslaved and sold to foreign climes.

Metacom was the original name of Philip. Annawan was the last of Philip's captains that fell into the hands of the English. He was with Philip at the time he was surprised and slain. Church, giving an account of the battle, says, " By this time the enemy perceived they were waylaid on the east of the swamp, and tacked short about. One of the enemy who seemed to be a great surly old fellow, hallooed with a loud voice, and often called out ' Iootash ! Iootash !' Captain Church called to his Indian, Peter, and asked who that was that called so. He answered that it was Annawan, Philip's great Captain, calling to his soldiers to stand to it, and fight stoutly."

STANZA XIX.

Scarce do they leave a scant and narrow place,
Where we may spread the blanket of our race.

" We have not room to spread our blankets" was a phrase by which the Indians signified that they were srtaightened in their possessions.—*See Heckewelder.*

STANZA XXII.

'Tis not the peag, said the Sagamore,
Nor knives, nor guns, nor garments red as blood,
That buy the lands I hold dominion o'er—
Lands that were fashioned by the red man's God;
But to my friend I give.

Williams says the Indians were very shy and jealous of selling their lands to any, and chose rather to make a grant of them to such as they affected; but at the same time expected such gratuities and rewards as made an Indian gift often times a very dear bargain.

Of Peag there were two sorts, the white and black. The former was called Wampom or Wampum, the latter Suckauhock. The first was wrought from the white, the last from the black or purple part of a shell.

STANZA LV.

Westward till now his course did Waban draw;
He shunned Weybosset, the accustomed ford.

I am informed that Weybosset in the Indian language, signified a ford, or crossing place. It is now the name of a street in Providence, extending southwesterly from the place in the river so designated by the Indians.

STANZA LVI.

And now did Indian town to town succeed,
Some large, some small, in populous array.

"In the Narraganset country (which is the chief people in the land) a man shall come to many townes, some bigger, some lesser, it may be a dozen in 20 miles travell."—*Williams' Key.*

CANTO FOURTH.

STANZA II.

There bristled darts—there glittered lances sheen.

Lances were arms which distinguished their sachems and other leaders. At this early period the Indians had scarcely become familiarized to the use of fire arms. The French and Dutch had indeed begun to supply them with these strange implements of death; but the English colonists had taken every precaution to prevent their being furnished with them. There were however no restraints on the trade in knives, hatchets, lances, &c.

STANZA XII.

Wampanoag gore
Will M'antonomi's feet in battle trace
Ere dies another moon.

This was the phraseology by which they described the change of the moon.

STANZA XXI.

On settles raised around the mounting blaze
Sate gray Wauontom, Keenomp, Sagamore.

Wauontom, a counsellor; Keenomp, a captain; Sagamore, a chief or Sachem.

The Sage Canonicus.

Williams considered Canonicus at the time he wrote his Key to the Indian languages, about fourscore years old.

STANZA XXII.

The Neyhom's mantle did his shoulders grace.

"Neyhomauashunck, a coat or mantle curiously made of the fairest plumes of the Neyhommauog, or turkies, which commonly their old men make; and is with them as velvet with us."—*Williams' Key.*

STANZA XXXIV.

Yes, ere he came, Pocasset's martial band
Did at our bidding come to fight the foe,
And the tall warriors of the Nipnet band
Rushed with swift foot to bend our battle bow;
And e'en the dog of Haup did cringing stand
Beside our wigwam, and his tribute show.

The reader will not expect in the text minute historical accuracy, yet it has been the wish of the author, throughout, not to violate *known* historical truth; and the following facts, he thinks, give something more than mere probability to the presumption, that Massasoit was, before the arrival of the whites, in some sense, one of the subject sachems of the Narraganset chiefs. The following extract of a deposition of Williams, dated at Narraganset the eighteenth of June, A. D. 1682, will shew that Canonicus had authority of some sort over Massasoit, and that the latter had claims, subordinate to those of Canonicus, to certain lands which Williams procured of the last named chief. In this deposition Williams says, "I desire posterity to see the most gracious hand of the Most High, (in whose hands are all things) that when the hearts of my countrymen and friends and brethren failed me, his infinite wisdom and merits stirred up the barbarous heart of Canonicus to love me as his own son to the last gasp, by which means I had not only Miantonomi and all the Coweset sachems my friends, but Ousamequin also, who, because of my great friendship for him at Plymouth, and *the authority of Canonicus*, consented freely, (being also well gratified by me) to the Gov. Winthrop's and my enjoyment of Prudence, yea of Providence itself, and all other parts I procured which were upon the point, and in effect whatever I desired of him." A distinction seems here to be intended between Prudence and other places. It is probable that Prudence was conquered by the Narragansets, whilst in possession of some under-sachem of Massasoit. And when the latter renounced all claims to this Island, he at the same time assured to Williams the peaceable enjoyment of Providence and all other places purchased of him.

A similar state of things appears in the deed, made by Canonicus and Miantonomi to the settlers of Aquidnay, to have existed both in reference to that Island and a part of Pokanoket, where Massasoit resided. This deed or memorandum is as follows: "We Canonicus and Miantonomi the two chief sachems of Narraganset, by virtue of our general command of the Bay, as also the particular subjecting of the dead sachem of Aquidnick and Kitackumuckqut, [Kikemuet] themselves and lands unto us, have sold unto Mr. Coddington and his friends united, the great Island of Aquidnick, lying from hence Eastward in this bay, as also the marsh or

grass upon Qunnannacut, [Conanicut] and the rest of the Islands in the bay (excepting Chubackuweda, formerly sold unto Mr. Winthrope, Governor of Massachusetts, and Mr. Williams of Providence,) also the grass upon the rivers and coasts about Kitakamuckqut, and from thence to Pauparquatsh [Poppasquash] for the full payment of forty fathoms of white beads."

Ousamequin was present and granted the use of the grass and trees on the main land, Pocasset side. Tradition points out the spot in which the battle was fought that decided the fate of Aquidnick, and assigns a date to the event anterior to the arrival of the English at Plymouth. Calender evidently considers it to have taken place during the great sickness or plague which prevailed among the eastern Indians before the coming of the Whites. When the English arrived, Massasoit was at Pokanoket, in a part of that territory so recently wrested by the Narragansets from (probably) one of his under sachems. He was then in no condition to resist any of the demands of the victors, and there can be little doubt that he submitted to them as a tributary or subject chief. The arrival of the English however gave him allies, and enabled him to set the Narragansets at defiance. Hence the hostility of the Narragansets to the Whites; and hence Massasoit's uniform adherence to them. That Massasoit was considered by the Narragansets a tributary chief, and bound to comply with the requisitions of their sachems, is rendered very probable by the following passage in Winthrop's journal. It is under date of April, 1632.

"The Governor received letters from Plymouth signifying that there had been a broil between their men at Sowamset and the Narraganset Indians, who set upon the English house, there to have taken Ousamequin, the Sagamore of Pokanoscott, [Pokanoket] who fled thither with all the people for refuge, and that Captain Standish, being gone thither to relieve the English which were in the house, sent home in all haste for more men and other provisions, upon intelligence that Canonicus was coming with a great army against them. On that, they wrote to our Governor for some powder to be sent with all possible speed, for it seemed they were unprovided. Upon this the Governor presently dispatched away a messenger with so much powder as he could carry, viz: twenty-seven pounds. The messenger returned and brought a letter from the Governor, signifying that the Indians were retired from Sowamset to fight the Pequins; [Pequots] which was probable; because John Sagamore and Chickatabott were gone, with all their men, to Canonicus who had sent for them."

Here Canonicus, on the point of marching against the Pequots, sent to certain sachems of Massachusetts to join him—there is little doubt but that the same requisition was made of Massasoit and attempted to be enforced. He took shelter however under the English, and the Narragan-

sets finding that they could not compel obedience without involving themselves in a war with the English, retired and prosecuted the expedition without his assistance. But in 1636, when they were somewhat relieved from the pressure of their enemies, they were probably about engaging in a war with the Wampanoags, to punish this contempt of their chiefs' authority.—Hence the great contest to which Williams alludes.

As a further proof that Massasoit was in some sort a subordinate sachem of the Narraganset chiefs, it may be added, that the above deed of Aquidnick appears to have been made in his presence, and that he and his tribe were afterwards satisfied for their rights in the lands conveyed. Those rights were therefore considered of a character subordinate to those of the Narraganset chiefs.

Since the foregoing remarks were written, the author has noticed a deposition of Williams, quoted by Backus in his history of the Baptists, and dated twenty-five years after the settlement of Providence was commenced, which applies directly to the question here discussed, and abundantly confirms the views already taken. Williams in his deposition says, "After I had obtained this place, now called Providence, of Canonicus and Miantonomi, [the chief Nanhiganset sachems,] Osamaquin laid his claim to this place also. This forced me to repair to the Nanhiganset sachems aforesaid, who declared that Osamaquin was their subject, and had solemnly, himself in person with ten men, subjected himself and his lands uuto them at the Nanhiganset, only now he seemed to revolt from his loyalty under the shelter of the English at Plymouth. This I declared from the Nanhiganset sachems to Osamaquin, who without any stick acknowledged to be true that he had so subjected, as the Nanhiganset sachems had affirmed; [but] that he was not subdued by war, which himself and his father had maintained against the Nanhigansets; but God said he, subdued us by a plague which swept away my people, and forced me to yield."

STANZA XXXVI.

They were the Yengee's men not ours, they said.

He [Massasoit] also talked of the French; bidding us not to suffer them to come to Narrohiganset; for it was king James his country, and he was king James his man."—*Mourt's Journal.*

STANZA XXXVIII.

He speaks a Manittoo!

"There is a general custom amongst them," says Williams, "at the apprehension of any excellence in men or women, birds, beasts or fish, &c. to cry out, Manittoo! that is, it is a god; as thus if they see one man excel others in wisdom, valour, strength or activity, they cry out Manittoo!"

STANZA XLII.

And for the Pequot deeds Awanux grieves.

"News came to Plymouth that Capt. Stone, who last summer, [1634] went out of the Bay or Lake, and so to Aquawaticus, where he took in Capt. Norton, putting in at the mouth of Connecticut, (on his way to Virginia) where the Pequins [Pequots] inhabit, was cut off with all his company, being eight in number."—*Winthrop's Journal.*

STANZA XLVI.

If true he speak—that should his actions show—
May not his heart be darker than yon cloud,
And yet his words white as its falling snow?
Yet if his speech were true—

"Canonicus, the old high sachem of the Narraganset Bay, (a wise and peaceable prince) once in a solemn oration to myself, in a solemn assembly, using this word, [Wannaumwayean, if he speak true] said, I have never suffered any wrong to be offered to the English since they landed; nor never will. He often repeated this word, Wannaumwayean, Englishman, if the English speak true, if he meane truly; then shall I goe to my grave in peace, and hope that the English and my posteritie shall live in love and peace together. I replied that he had no cause (as I hoped) to question the Englishman's Wannaumaaonck, that is faithfulnesse, he having had long experience of their friendlinesse and trustinesse. He took a stick and broke it into ten pieces, and related ten instances, (laying down a stick at every instance,) which gave him cause thus to feare and say. I satisfied him on some presently, and presented the rest to the governors of the English, who I hope will be far from giving just cause to have barbarians question their Wannaumwanonck, or faithfulnesse."—*Williams' Key.*

STANZA XLVIII.

This fragment shows the serpent's skin they sent,
Filled with round thunders to our royal tent.

"The people called Narragansets," says the N. E. Memorial, "sent messengers unto our Plantations with a bundle of arrows tied together with a snake-skin, which their interpreter told them was a threatening and a challenge, upon which the Governor of Plymouth sent them a rough answer, viz: that, if they loved war better than peace, they might begin when they would, they had done them no wrong, neither did they fear them, nor should they find them unprovided; and by another messenger they sent the snake-skin back again, with bullets in it; but they would not receive it, but sent it back again!" Mr. Davis in a note adds, "the

messenger was accompanied by a friendly Indian Tockamahamon. The messenger inquired for Squanto who was absent. The bundle of arrows was left for him, and the messenger departed without any explanation. When Squanto returned, and the dubious present was delivered him, he immediately understood the object." The Planters, however, seem to have considered themselves threatened. They immediately began to strengthen their defences, and every precaution was taken against a surprise.

STANZA XLIX.

This, upon Haup when raged our battle loud,
How their round thunders made that battle dumb.

See the passage from Winthrop, in note to stanza thirty-fourth.

This, how amid the Pequot nation they
Build the square lodge, and whet him to the fray.

The Plymouth Company had established a trading house on the Connecticut as early as 1633. Their trade with the Pequots in arrow points, knives, hatchets, &c. might very probably give offence to the Narragansets. "We found," says Winthrop, "that all the sachems of Narraganset, except Canonicus and Miantonomi, were the contrivers of Mr. Oldham's death, and the occasion was, because he went to make peace and trade with the Pequots."

CANTO FIFTH.

STANZA XI.

Brother, the spirit of my son is gone;
I burned my lodge to speak my mighty grief.

Williams says, "the chiefe and most aged peaceable father of the countrey, Canounicus, having buried his sonne, he burned his own palace, and all his goods in it, (amongst them to a great value) in a solemn remembrance of his son, and in a kind of humble expiation to the gods, who (as they believe) had taken away his sonne from him."

I am thy father, thou shalt be my son.

See the extract from Williams' testimony, in note to stanza thirty-fourth, of canto fourth.

STANZA XXIV.

The sable fox-hide did his loins inclose—
The sable fox-tail formed his nodding crest.

The Indians had a superstitious regard for the black fox. Williams says, they considered it a Manittoo—a god, spirit or divine power.

STANZA XXXIII.

Hast thou forgot, when, by Cohannet's stream,
To curse the strangers every charm was tried.

"But before I pass on, let the reader take notice of a very remarkable particular which was made known to the Planters at Plimouth some short space after their arrival; that the Indians before they came to the English to make friendship with them, got all the Pawaws in the country, who, for three days together, in a horrid and devilish manner, did curse and execrate them with their conjurations, which assembly and service they held in a dark and dismal swamp."—*N. E. Memorial.*

How I appeared, and, by the ember's gleam,
To the hard rock my lance's point applied,
And scored my mandate.

The inscriptions on the rocks by Taunton river have afforded a subject of much speculation to the antiquary. It would not be strange if the Indians ascribed to them a supernatural origin.

STANZA XLIII.

An odour, strange but not offensive, spread
As he advanced and nearer Williams drew.

If my recollection serves me, Dr. Good, in his Book of Nature, supposes that the seeming power of fascination in serpents may arise from an odour emitted by them. The tale of the Hunter and the Rattlesnake, in the New-England Legends, must furnish the author with a justification for the use which he has made of this serpent in the text; and it ought also to be added, that his description of the serpent, in the act of exercising his mysterious powers, is not essentially different from that in the tale to which he has referred.

STANZA LXIIV.

Here stretched Aquidnay far toward ocean blue.

Aquidnay is the Indian name for Rhode-Island. This name is variously written, sometimes Aquidneck, sometimes Aquetnet and sometimes

Aquidnet. Winthrop generally writes it Aquidnay, and the author has chosen so to write it, for no other reason, than that the sound is a little more agreeable. There is some reason to conclude that Aquetnet is nearer its true etymology. See the following note.

STANZA LXXI.

Another sachem sways
The Isle of peace.

Aquene signified, in the Narraganset dialect, peace,—It is possible that Aquetnet, as the name of this Island has been sometimes written, may be its derivative—*et* is a termination usually denoting place. But whether this be or be not its etymology, the designation is not inapplicable, since the Island must have been a place of security against the roving Maquas, Pequots, Tarrateens, &c.

STANZA LXXIII.

There sowams gleams, if names the Muse aright,
Till far in forests brown his glories fade.

Calender intimates that sowams is properly the name of a river, where the two Swansey rivers meet and run together for near a mile, when they empty themselves in the Narraganset bay. Sowamset may, therefore, indicate some town or other place on the banks of the river. These names have been used by some as synonymes.

CANTO SIXTH.

STANZA III.

Who with the laboring axe,
On Seekonk's eastern marge, invades the wood.

Nothing is said of Williams, by the histories of the age, from the time he left Salem, until his expulsion from Seekonk, afterwards called Rehoboth. We learn, from some of Williams' letters, that, after purchasing land from Massasoit, he there built and planted, before he was informed by Governor Winslow that he was within the limits of the Plymouth patent. Until this information, he had supposed himself to be beyond the limits of either Plymouth, or Massachusetts. And, certainly, the language of the Plymouth patent was sufficiently equivocal to countenance almost any construction of it in reference to the Western (otherwise called Southern) bounds of its grant. I will transcribe its words, that the reader may

judge for himself. It grants the lands "lying between Cohasset rivulet toward the North, and Narraganset river toward the South, the great Western Ocean toward the East, and a straight line, extending into the main land toward the West, from the mouth of Narraganset river to the utmost bounds of a country called Pokanoket, alias Sowamset, and another straight line, extending directly from the mouth of Cohasset river toward the West, so far into the main land Westward, as the utmost limits of Pokanoket, alias Sowamset."

What is here intended by Narraganset river? Is it the Bay or some river falling into the Bay? What is intended by the utmost bounds of Pokanoket? Do the words of the patent include or exclude that territory? The truth is that the geography of the country was, at that time, very imperfectly understood, and the words of the patent are not a true description of the territory intended to be granted. The charter of Rhode-Island is a proof that the Plymouth patent was not considered as embracing within its limits what is called Pokanoket, alias Sowamset; since that charter covers a considerable part of that very territory. But, if Pokanoket was not included by the Plymouth patent, Williams ought not to have been treated as a trespasser. It is not my purpose to discuss the question of boundaries. These observations are made for the purpose of showing, that Williams had his reasons for believing that he was out of the jurisdiction of Plymouth.

STANZA XXVIII.

And brandishing his blade, he jeering said,
That vengeance gave it eyes and appetite;
It soon would eat—but eat in silence dread.

"He [an Indian slain by Standish] bragged of the excellency of his knife: *Hinnaim namen, hinnaim michen, matta cuts:* that is to say, by and by it should see, by and by it should eat, but not speak."

STANZA XXX.

And feign some vestige of marauding foe,
To shift suspicion and his guilt conceal.

When the Indians were desirous of involving a neutral tribe in their wars, it seems to have been a common artifice to kill an enemy and leave the war club, or the arrow of the neutral party by the dead body.

CANTO SEVENTH.

STANZA V.

That flock now torn with strife, their shepherd from them riven.

The opinions for which Williams was banished were but the beginning of schism in the Massachusetts churches, and his banishment but the commencement of persecution. Many members of the Church of Salem still adhered to him, and finally followed him to Providence.

STANZA XXIV.

O'er yon far distant brow
Smokes in the vale Neponset's peopled town.

Neponset is the name of a river in Massachusetts. On the banks of this river there seem to have been several Indian towns, or villages, at the time of Williams' banishment.

STANZA LXII.

And by the lock he held a trunkless head.

"Timequassin, to cut off, or behead; which they are most skilful to do in fight."—*Williams' Key.*

CANTO EIGHTH.

STANZA XVI.

Who cannot see,
That a dark cloud o'er our New-England lowers?
The tender conscience struggles to be free—
The tyrant struggles, and retains his powers.

Williams seems to have had a strong presentiment that a season of persecution was approaching, and often expressed a desire, that his Plantation *might be a shelter for persons distressed for conscience.*

STANZA XIX.

And, through the eve, some reasoning, I opine,
(For all may err) a weighty theme upon,
May not be deemed amiss.

It was the first intention of the author to have drawn the materials of the conversation in the text from the controversy between Williams and

Cotton; but, on examination, he was satisfied that it was not suited to a performance of this kind. This controversy originated as follows: A prisoner (one who was doubtless suffering for heretical opinions) addressed a letter to a Mr. Hall, in which he discussed and argued against the right of government to persecute for matters of conscience. Hall sent this letter to Mr. Cotton, who answered it. Hall, dissatisfied with the answer, transmitted it to Williams. In the hands of Williams it remained some time; for he was struggling with all the difficulties incident to his situation at Providence. He however composed a reply to Cotton's answer, which he entitled the Bloody Tenent. He says it was written whilst engaged at the hoe and oar, toiling for bread—whilst attending on Parliament—in a change of rooms and places; in a variety of strange houses; sometimes in the field in the midst of travel; where he had been forced to gather and scatter his loose thoughts and papers. And, certainly, considering the circumstances in which it was composed, it is a work calculated to increase our admiration of the man. The Bloody Tenent, together with Mr. Cotton's answer to the prisoner's letter, was published in London, at a time when his puritan brethren in England were addressing him and others in Massachusetts, with the most earnest remonstrances against their cruel persecutions of other denominations.

He, in his replies, had been endeavoring to extenuate and excuse the conduct of the civil government, and had taken particular care to exculpate himself. It is easy, therefore, to conceive what a shock this reverend dignitary must have suffered, when his answer to the prisoner's letter, which went in principle the full length of the most unsparing persecution, together with Williams' reply, was published and circulated among the brethren there. His conduct was that of a detected felon, who charges his accuser with the crime, in order to divert attention from himself. He instantly raised a cry, that Williams was *persecuting him*, by publishing his answer to the prisoner's letter, and commenting upon it. But he felt himself under the necessity of doing something more. His brethren in England would require some sort of justification; and one consistent with the sentiments he had already expressed in his letters to them. Hence the controversy, between him and Williams, is, on the part of Cotton, a sophistical attempt to avoid the charge of persecuting for matters of conscience. We do not persecute consciences, says he, but we do punish those who commit violence on their own consciences. If the reader should be so curious as to inquire, how Mr. Cotton ascertained when a man committed violence on his own conscience, I will state his process as I understand it. When it was discovered that any member entertained opinions inconsistent with the fundamental doctrines of the order to which he belonged, he was in the first place called before the church, and admonished of his error. If he still persis-

ted, he was summoned before the magistracy, where the charges were specified, and the magistracy determined whether he was, or was not convinced in his own mind of his errors. His judges never failed to be satisfied that he was convinced. If the accused afterwards persisted in his opinions, he was considered as one committing violence on his own conscience, and treated as an incorrigible heretic and disturber of the peace, and as such banished, imprisoned, scourged, or hanged, as the enormity of his heretical opinions might require. I have necessarily given the conversation, between Williams and the Plymouth elder, a turn different from that of the controversy between him and Cotton; but have endeavored to preserve something of the tone of feeling which pervades the latter. I flatter myself, however, that the Plymouth elder is a more moderate man than Mr. Cotton. As a proof, hear Mr. Cotton in his own words set forth the advantages which a state derives from persecuting heretics, and the summary mode in which the civil magistrate may deal with them.

To the question of Mr. Williams, What glory to God—what good to the souls and bodies of their subjects, did these Princes bring in persecuting? Mr. Cotton thus replies: "The good, that is brought to Princes and subjects, by the due punishment of apostate seducers and idolaters and blasphemers, is manifold.

First; It putteth away evil from the people, and cutteth off a gangrene which would spread to further ungodliness.

Secondly; It driveth away wolves from worrying and scattering the sheep of Christ; (for false teachers be wolves.)

Thirdly; Such executions upon such evil doers causeth all the country to hear and fear, and do no more such wickedness.

Fourthly; The punishments, executed upon false prophets and seducing teachers, do bring down showers of God's blessings upon the civil state.

Fifthly; It is an honor to God's justice that such judgments are executed."

He says, "if there be stones in the streets the magistrate need not fetch a sword from the smith's shop, nor a halter from the roper's, to punish a heretic."

It will appear that time has made no improvement upon the leading principles of Williams, as gathered from different parts of his replies to Cotton. He says, that "the people are the origin of all free power in government." "That the people are not invested by Christ Jesus with power to rule his Church." That they can give no such power to the magistrate. "That the kingdom of Christ is spiritual"—that to introduce the civil sword into this spiritual kingdom is "to confound Heaven and Earth together, and lay all upon heaps of confusion"—"Is to take Christ and make him king by force (John vi, 15)—to make his kingdom

of this world—to set up a civil and temporal Israel—to bound out new earthly lands of Canaan; yea, and to set up a Spanish inquisition, in all parts of the world, to the speedy destruction of millions of souls, &c."

Cotton says, "that when the kingdoms of this earth become the kingdoms of the Lord, it is not by making Christ a temporal king; but by making the temporal kingdoms nursing fathers to the Church"—"that religion was not to be propagated by the sword; but protected and preserved by it."

Williams replies, "that the husbandman weeds his garden to increase his grain, and that consequently it is the object of the hand that destroys the heretic to make the christian"—"That the sword may make a nation of hypocrites, but not of christians," &c.

I have thrown together these few detached sentences that the reader, who may have little inclination to peruse a controversy on a question which happily has no place in the present age, may form some opinion of its character. The discussion occupies two considerable volumes.

STANZA XL.

Williams, he said, it is my thankless lot,
Thee with no pleasant message now to greet;
Nor hath our Winslow, in his charge, forgot
(For his behest I bear and words repeat)
His former friendship, but right loath is he
To vex his neighbors by obliging thee.

After Williams had built and planted at Seekonk, he was visited by a messenger from Plymouth with a letter from Winslow, then Governor. Professing his and others friendship for him, he lovingly advised Williams, since he had fallen into the edge of their bounds, and they were loath to displease the Bay, to remove but to the other side of the water, and there he had the country before him, and might be as free as themselves, and they should be loving neighbors together.—See Williams letter to Mason. Mass. His. Col.

STANZA XLIV.

By the black prophet was to Dudley shown
Thy purchase feigned—by him to us made known.

Williams, in his letter to Mason, says, that Governor Winthrop and some of the council of Massachusetts were disposed to recall him from banishment, and confer upon him some mark of distinguished favor for his services. "It is known," says Williams, "who hindered—who never

promoted the liberty of other men's consciences." Mr. Davis, in a note to his edition of the New-England Memorial, conjectures that he alludes to Mr. Dudley. The reader will not consider me as doing violence to historical probability, by supposing that this man gave information to the magistrates of Plymouth, that Williams had established himself within the limits of their patent, and required his expulsion. Surely it is not too much to suppose of a man, who, in view of his approaching dissolution, could write the following lines and leave them as a legacy to posterity:—

" Let men of God in courts and churches watch
O'er such as do a toleration hatch,
Lest that ill egg bring forth a cockatrice
To poison all with heresy and vice,
If men be left and otherwise combine,
My epitaph's I dy'd no libertine."

STANZA XLVI.

God gave James Stuart this, and James gave us.

The patents of the companies, which settled this country, granted them lands without any reference to the rights of the natives. But the companies never availed themselves of these grants to that extent. Whatever may have been their opinions, they acted under them as if they had only invested them with the right of preemption. Cotton Mather is the only historian, that I recollect, who makes a merit of paying the Indians for their lands, and of not expelling them immediately from the soil in virtue of these patents.

CANTO NINTH.

STANZA III.

Early that morn, beside the tranquil flood,
Where ready trimmed rode Waban's frail canoe,
The banished man, his spouse and children stood,
And bade their lately blooming hopes adieu.

I have represented Williams, throughout this narrative, as unaccompanied by any of his Salem friends. And such I think, was the fact up to the time he left, or was about leaving Seekonk. Indeed, there was no necessity for any of his friends to accompany him in his flight from Salem " in the winter's snow." They could render him no assistance in negocia-

tions with the Indians.—They could not alleviate his hardships by participating in them. But what seems to settle the question, (if in fact it be a question) is, that he, himself, though he frequently alludes to his sufferings and transactions "during that bitter cold winter," no where intimates that any white man participated in them. He uniformly speaks in the first person singular: "I was sorely tossed for fourteen weeks—I left Salem in the winter's snow—I found a great contest going on between the chiefs—I travelled between them—I first pitched and began to build and plant at Seekonk—I received a message from Mr. Winslow—I crossed the Seekonk and settled at Mooshausick." It is strange that he should, on no occasion, mention that some of his friends suffered with him, if any actually did. All accurate information concerning Williams, during these fourteen weeks, must, I apprehend, be drawn from his writings; and I have chosen to follow them. And indeed had he been accompanied by one, or more of his friends, they could not have aided the author in the conduct of his narrative, any more than they could have borne a part in the trials and labors of Williams.

I have not been able to ascertain in what particular part of Seekonk Williams attempted to form his plantation, and have consequently felt myself at liberty to suppose it was in the neighborhood of Pawtucket Falls.

STANZA XXV.

Netop Whatcheer! broke on the listening air.

Netop; friend. The tradition is, that when Williams in a canoe approached the eastern banks of the river, at a place now called Whatcheer Cove, he saw a gathering of the natives. When he had come within hail, he was accosted by them in broken English with the friendly salutation, Wha-cheer! Wha-cheer! Here he landed, and was kindly received by them. The land, which was afterwards set off to him, included this spot, and he commemorated the amicable greeting of his Indian friends, by naming the field there assigned to him the Manor of Whatcheer, or Whatcheer Manor. This field is now the property of Governor Fenner, and the field adjoining it, which was likewise set off to Williams, has continued to the present day in the possession of his descendants. We are probably indebted to the name which Williams gave the first mentioned field, for the preservation of this tradition.

STANZA XXXVIII.

Ay, almost hears the future pavements jar
Beneath a people's wealth, and half divines,
Religious Freedom! what bright glories wait
Thy earliest altars—thy predestined state.

To show that Williams was not without a presentiment of the temporal

advantages that might arise to his projected settlement, from a full liberty in religious concernments, I quote the following from his memorial to Parliament, prefixed to his BloodyTenent made more bloody, &c. Speaking of Holland he says; "From Enchuysen, therefore, a den of persecuting lions and mountain leopards, the persecuted fled to Amsterdam, a poor fishing town, yet harborous and favorable to the flying, though dissenting consciences. This confluence of the persecuted, by God's most gracious coming with them, drew boats—drew trade—drew shipping, and that so mightily in so short a time, that shipping, trade, wealth, greatness, honor, (almost to astonishment in the eyes of all Europe and the world) have appeared to fall, as out of Heaven, in a crown or garland upon the head of this poor Fishertown."

STANZA XLI.

From wild Pawtucket to Pawtuxet's bounds,
To thee and thine be all the teeming grounds.

The first grant made by Canonicus and Miantonomi to Williams, appears to have been a verbal grant of all the lands and meadows upon the two fresh rivers, called Mooshausick and Wanaskatucket; but on the 24th of March, 1637, they confirmed this grant by deed, and, in consideration of the many kindnesses and services he was constantly rendering them, made the bounds Pawtuxet river on the south, Pawtucket on the North-west, and the town of Mashapauge on the West. This grant includes nearly all the county of Providence, and a part of the county of Kent.

STANZA XLVIII.

Her well-cast anchor here—her lasting hope in Thee.

The Anchor, with the motto Hope, which formed the device on the seal of the Colony, may be considered as having reference to the dangers and difficulties through which the settlers had passed, and were passing at the time it was adopted. This was done in 1663.

STANZA L.

ages far shall o'er our graves recite
Thy protecting grace their father's sense,
, when they name their homes, proclaim Thy Providence.

illiams carried the philanthropy, which breathes in his great princi- Of Religious Freedom, into all the important acts of his life. Although tha unificent grant of Canonicus and Miantonomi had been made to him he he shortly after made it the common property of his friends, who uni him at Providence, reserving to himself no more than an equal share, ed ceiving from them the small sum of thirty pounds, not as purchase

money, but as a remuneration for the gratuities which he had made to the Indians out of his own estate.

"The following passage," says Mr. Benedict, "in his history of the Baptists, explains, in a very pleasing manner, Mr. Williams' designs in these transactions.

'Notwithstanding I had frequent promise from Miantonomi, my kind friend, that it should not be land that I should want about these bounds mentioned, provided I satisfied the Indians there inhabiting, I having made covenant of peacable neighborhood with all the sachems and natives round about us, and having *in a sense of God's merciful Providence to me in my distress, called the place Providence; I desired it might be for a shelter to persons distressed for conscience. I then considered the condition of divers of my countrymen.* I communicated my said purchase unto my loving friends, John Throckmorton and others, who then desired to take shelter here with me. And whereas, by God's merciful assistance, I was procurer of the purchase, not by moneys nor payment, the natives being so shy and jealous that moneys could not do it, but by that language—acquaintance and favor with the natives, and other advantages which it pleased God to give me, and also bore the charges and venture of all the gratuities which I gave to the great sachems and natives round about us, and lay engaged for a loving and peaceable neighborhood with them to my great charge and travel; it was therefore thought fit that I should receive some consideration and gratuity.'—Thus, after mentioning the said thirty pounds, 'this sum I received, and in love to my friends and *with respect to a town and place of succour for the distressed as aforesaid*, I do acknowledge this said sum a full satisfaction,' he went on, in full and strong terms, to confirm those lands to said inhabitants, reserving no more to himself than an equal share with the rest; his wife also signing the deed."

APPENDIX.

Having in the preceding notes given some account of the principal events which marked the life of Williams up to the time he settled at Mooshausick, it may be agreeable to such of my readers, as have not his biography at hand, to find here some notice of the actions which distinguished the remainder of his days. The following summary is drawn chiefly from Mr. Benedict's History of the Baptists, and the sketch of the life of Williams annexed to the first volume of the Rhode-Island Historical Coltions.

Williams was soon joined at Providence by a number of his friends from Salem. In a short time their number amounted to forty persons. They then adopted a form of government, by which they admitted none to become their associates but such as held to the principle of Religious Freedom.

The year following his settlement a formidable conspiracy of the Indians was planned against the English colonists. He gave his persecutors information of the fact. He addressed a letter to the Commissioners of the United Colonies, "assuring them that the country would suddenly be all on fire, meaning by war—that by strong reasons and arguments he could convince any man thereof that was of another mind—that the Narragansets had been with the plantations combined with Providence, and had solemnly settled a neutrality with them, which fully shewed their counsels and resolutions for war."* Had this plot been carried into effect it would probably have eventuated in the ruin of the colonies from which he had been banished. Instead of indulging resentment by remaining inactive, he immediately exerted himself to bring about a dissolution of the Indian Confederacy. He accomplished what no other man in New-England at that time would have attempted. By his influence with the Narragansets he broke up the combination, and formed treaties between them and the united colonies, by which the latter had their aid in the war which followed with the Pequots.

* *Hutchinson's State Papers.*

The four first years, that succeeded Williams' settlement at Providence, were necessarily occupied by him there about the affairs of the Plantations. He travelled amongst the Indians, and secured the friendship of their chiefs and warriors. He promoted the settlement of Rhode-Island and Warwick. Much of his time must also have been required in making provisions for the support of his family, cast out, as they were, into the depths of a savage wilderness. Soon after his settlement he had embraced the leading tenets of the Baptists, and had been baptized. He then formed a society of this order and preached to it; but resigned his pastoral office on his going to England to solicit the first Charter.

Not being permitted to pass through Massachusetts in order to embark on this voyage, he went by land to Manhattan, [New-York,] then under the Dutch. A war between the Dutch and Indians was at that time raging with great violence. In this war, Mrs. Ann Hutchinson and family, who had been banished from Massachusetts, had fallen victims to Indian barbarities; and, as if every step of this remarkable man was to bear the impress of his benevolence, he was here instrumental in pacifying the savages and stopping the effusion of blood. After this, he took ship for England. Whilst on this voyage, that no time might be lost in laying posterity under obligations to him, he composed his Key to the Indian Languages. This, together with his Bloody Tenent was published on his arrival in England. Here, as agent for the colonies of Providence, Rhode-Island and Warwick, he obtained a charter of incorporation, signed by the Earl of Warwick, then Governor and Admiral of the English Plantations, and by his council.

On the 17th September, 1644, he landed at Boston, bringing a letter of recommendation to the Governor and Assistants of Massachusetts Bay, from some of the most influential members of the Long Parliament. He thus avoided the penalty incurred by entering their bounds. At the first General Assembly formed under this Charter, a law was passed establishing the most unlimited toleration in matters of conscience. Unconfined to those who professed Christianity, its provisions extended to the whole human family. I mention this, because it has been said that Maryland furnishes the first example of a legislative act of this kind. The Maryland act was passed in 1649, and its privileges extended only to those who professed to believe in Jesus Christ.

Mr. Coddington afterwards procured a charter, which gave him almost unlimited authority over the Islands of Narraganset Bay. This caused great discontent. It was called *Coddington's Obstruction.*— Williams and Clark were sent to England, in 1651, to procure its revocation. They effected the object of their mission in October, 1652. Whilst in England, Williams resided with Sir Henry Vane, at his seat in Lincolnshire. He returned in 1652, and brought a letter from Sir Henry,

inviting the planters to a close union. The colony during his absence had been distracted by many divisions. This letter, together with the earnest solicitations of Williams, restored harmony. He was several times after, as well as before this time, elected to the office of President, or Governor of the Colony.

Williams died in 1683, at Providence, and was buried under arms, in his family burying ground, with every testimony of respect which the Colony could manifest.

The religious sentiments of Williams seem to have become more and more liberal as he advanced in life. Whatever rigid forms those sentiments may have assumed, in the early part of his career, they gradually melted down and blended themselves in that warm and deep feeling of Universal Benevolence, which had given birth to his great principle of Religious Freedom. The dominion of that feeling, over every other in his breast, is sufficiently indicated by the firmness with which he adhered to this principle in circumstances the most trying. This feeling naturally sought for a congenial nature in other breasts, and Williams soon learned that there were good men in all societies. He freely joined in worship with all, and imparted his instructions to all who were disposed to hear him. This liberality, however, was not inconsistent with theological discussions, in which he occasionally participated. His dispute with the Friends gave umbrage to some of that order. It occupied two or three days, and eventuated by a publication by Williams entitled Gorge Fox digged out of his burroughs. Although some of this order seem, for a time, to have remembered this dispute to his disadvantage, yet there were others who cherished for him the kindest and most respectful feelings.—Among these was Governor Jenks, who, though a Quaker, bestows the highest praise on Williams, both as a man and christian.

When not engaged abroad on business of the colony, he statedly preached to the Indians in Narraganset; and those amongst them, who would hear no one else, were attentive to him. That branch of the Narragansets, called the Nianticks, seem to have been an object of his peculiar care. They were so far christianized by his labors that they took no part in Philip's war, and their present existence, as the only remnant of a once powerful people, may be traced to the effects of his ministry.

Williams retained his influence with the Indians nearly to the last of his and their existence. While Philip was making preparation for war, in 1671, commissioners were sent to Taunton to inquire into the cause. Philip, suspicious of their design, remained in his camp, and, when summoned by the commissioners to meet them, he required that they should meet him. Matters remained in this posture until Williams, then seventy years old, with a Mr. Brown, offered to become a hostage in his camp. Philip then met the commissioners, delivered up seventy guns and prom-

ised fidelity. This event gave the colony four years to prepare for the final struggle.

Whilst, in 1676, this cruel and exterminating war was raging, the Indians approached the town of Providence. Williams, it is said, on seeing their advance, still feeling his wonted confidence in his influence over them, took his staff and left the garrison. But some of the old warriors on seeing him approach, advanced from the main body, and told him, that as for themselves they would do him no harm, nor would any amongst them who had long known him, but their young men could not be restrained. Upon which he returned to the garrison.

ERRATA.

In Canto first, stanza 55, line 4, for Aye read Ay. S. 65, l. 6, for subtil r. subtle. S. 72, l. 8, for Sowanui r. Sowaniu. S. 80, l. 1, for around r. round.

Canto second, s. 69, l. 1, for bounds r. bound.

Canto third, s. 47, l. 6, for group's r. groups.

Canto fourth, s. 40, l. 8, for belt r. belts.

Canto fifth, s. 13, l. 1, for Corbitant's r. Corbitants. S. 16, l. 2, for plan's r. plans. S. 39, l. 3, for Nor r. Now. S. 71, l. 7, for chuse r. choose.

Canto sixth, s. 18, l. 4, for tasels r. tassels. S. 31, l. 1, for portentious r. portentous.

Canto seventh, s. 7, l. 2, for burden's r. burdened. S. 30, l. 7, for tickets r. thickets.

Canto ninth, s. 9, l. 3, for straightened r. straitened. S. 31, l. 8, for Chepians r. Chepian's.

The author's familiarity with the text was probably the cause of his gliding over the above mistakes (and perhaps others not included in the list) whilst correcting the proofs. On a revision, he has noticed errors in the punctuation; but which it is believed will not materially interfere with a correct understanding of the passages in which they occur.

HW 2C33 G

HW 2C33 G

HW 2C33 G

HW 2C33 G